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season
this year



A pre-nup
in Brad
and
Angie's
future?

Shelter fire claims animals

TORONTO "Topsy didn't make it." The tragic news, delivered by a tearful animal-welfare worker, greeted the chihuahua's new owner yesterday following an early morning fire that destroyed Durham Region Humane Society's shelter and claimed the lives of 150 cats, three dogs and several rabbits and rodents.

Topsy, recently rescued from an abusive situation, had been at the shelter awaiting a spaying operation before going to her new home with an adoptive couple.

"I hate God right now," the man cried as he broke the news to his wife outside a neighbouring shelter where several animals saved from the fire were taken.

Eight dogs, two cats and a rat named Baby Barnard were rescued by firefighters before the fire engulfed the overcrowded shelter in a run-down industrial building east of Toronto. The victims perished from smoke inhalation.

The cause of the fire is still being investigated. Damage to the 2,400-square-foot facility is estimated at \$250,000. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Gift Guide pgs 13-20

Techies
need
good
gifts, too



Food pg 24

Seasonal
delights

Homes pg 23

Last-minute
holiday
decor



Weather Walking in a snowy wonderland



A woman walks through the snow on the Halifax Common yesterday. Halifax was hit with a mix of snow, ice pellets and rain yesterday, but today's forecast calls for mostly sunny skies with a high of -1 C. See story, pg 3

RYAN TATLIN/FOR METRO HALIFAX

Mental illness still a Canadian Forces stigma: Ombudsman

MILITARY It took him a long time to recover from those words. After hearing family members tell him he had changed from the fun-loving guy he used to be — and a threat from his wife to get help or get out — Chuck Marazzo finally worked up the courage to tell his military boss about the angry outbursts and hyper-vigilance he had been experiencing.

"When I went to talk to my higher-ups — my sergeant major — he just told me I was weak and, you know, to deal with it," Marazzo, 50, said yesterday as he recalled a conversation he had in 1997 before being released from the Canadian Forces for post-traumatic stress disorder.

"It took a lot of years to get over just that statement, because sometimes living with the stigma is worse than living with the injury itself," said Marazzo, whose 21-year career took him from Cyprus to Rwanda.

The stigma surrounding mental illness remains one of the greatest challenges facing the Canadian Forces today, the military ombudsman said in a report on operational stress injuries released yesterday.

The 62-page report is a follow-up to a 2002 assessment of operational stress injuries and notes while there has been progress — including a plan to hire 218 new mental health professionals by next March — 18 of the 31 recommendations from the initial report have not been fully implemented.

Based on interviews with more than 360 current and former military members, the report concluded some military personnel are not diagnosed properly or getting treatment they need. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

Tory patronage call?

NDP suggest Fage appointment after minister mixup

PAUL MCLEOD
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The Tories accidentally called an opposition MLA looking for a patronage appointment for Ernie Fage, says the NDP.

East Hants MLA John MacDonell says he got a call Monday from Finance Minister Michael Baker looking for an "appointment for Ernie."

Baker meant to call the other John MacDonell, who is chief of staff for federal Defence Minister Peter MacKay.

Baker admits mixing up the calls, but denies asking for any appointment for Fage. He says he was merely asking about a project in Fage's riding.

Fage is an independent MLA after twice resigning from cabinet in disgrace. Most recently he was booted out of the Tory caucus in 2007 when he was videotaped crashing into a car after leaving a pub and fleeing the scene.

MacDonell said the call started light, with Baker talking about the weather.

"Then he said, 'I just want to talk about something we've been talking about in regards to getting an appointment for Ernie,'" said MacDonell.

"I said, 'Look, I'm not sure where you're going.' Then he mentioned 'Peter' and said, 'We'd like an appointment for Ernie.'"

MacDonell says he realized who Baker thought he

was and clarified he was NDP MLA John MacDonell. He said there was then a long silence, followed by Baker saying "OK, bye" and hanging up.

MacDonell said Baker clearly seemed to be referencing a previous conversation about a federal appointment for Ernie Fage.

But both the premier's and MacKay's offices denied any notion of an appointment for Fage. Fage also denied looking for an appointment.

Baker called the whole thing a misunderstanding.



Ernie Fage

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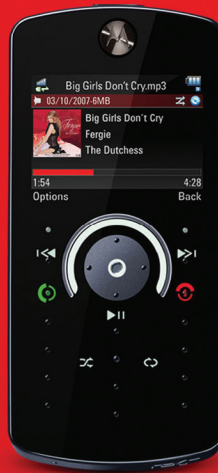
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Avoid holiday fires Don't get burned this holiday. N.S. fire marshal Bob Cormier says cooking, candle and ash fires are the biggest cause of holiday blazes. He suggests never cooking while tipsy, don't put ashes in green bins, watch candles and keep trees watered. **METRO HALIFAX**

3

Local

Snow-slicked roads hamper motorists

JENNIFER TAPLIN
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Let it Snow may be a popular song this time of year, but it wasn't a cheery refrain for many motorists around Halifax yesterday.

The city was treated to some Christmas white yesterday — enough to keep the snow plows busy and cause a few accidents.

"There have been five collisions and crashes since 1:30 p.m.," said Cpl. Joe Taplin with the RCMP.

There were no major injuries involved. The accidents were on highways 107 and 207, and Cole Harbour Road. The other two were reports of cars going off the road.

It was the same case in metro where Halifax Regional Police were called to more than a dozen weather-

At least we're not in the Prairies

• Halifax did really well compared to Saint John, N.B., which got 16 centimetres of

snow yesterday, and the Prairies have been in a deep freeze for days.

related accidents yesterday. "They were all minor in nature and the roads are very slippery," said Const. Jeff Carr.

Bob Robichaud, a meteorologist with Environment Canada, said we got at least five centimetres yesterday. "There's a good area of snow pushing through."

There were snowfall warnings in Cumberland County where the Cobequid Pass was expected to be hit with at least 15 centimetres of snow throughout the day and night.

"We should be looking at improving conditions (this) morning and not a bad day at all," Robichaud said. "In

Halifax, there should be some kind of a warmup, but if it's going to be enough to melt an appreciable amount of snow is hard to say."

But don't get too comfortable — Arctic winds are headed our way. Robichaud said those cold systems don't get into this part of the country until January or February.

The snow took it easy on power lines yesterday, as Nova Scotia Power reported no outages by the afternoon. And at the airport, Peter Spurway said they were "holding their own." Any flight delays yesterday were due to weather in central Canada or the U.S.

Gas Tax Fund extension to bring in \$223M

INFRASTRUCTURE Nova Scotia will see \$223 million in infrastructure funding from the federal government as of yesterday thanks to a contract extension.

The province and federal government signed an extension of the Gas Tax Fund.

"This ... gives municipalities the stable, predictable and significant funding support they need. They can now take action to improve their economic well-being by planning, building strong and modern infrastructure," said federal Defence and Atlantic Gateway Minister Peter MacKay.

The signing was coupled



Mayor Peter Kelly, centre, shakes hands with Jamie Muir, minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, yesterday. Seated at left is federal Defence Minister Peter MacKay.

with the announcement of another \$50 million next year for infrastructure to be split evenly between the feds and province as part of the Building Canada Plan.

The province will get payments of \$25 million of federal money under the plan each year until 2014.

"The province/territorial base funding will help stimulate the economy by allowing our communities to continue to grow and prosper while at the same time improving Canada's overall infrastructure," MacKay said.

HRM Mayor Peter Kelly said the deal reaffirms municipalities as the economic engine of the country.

PAUL MCLEOD/METRO HALIFAX

Projects

• Eight projects in particular were pegged for funds: Highway 102 weigh-in; Enfield motion scale; Highway 101, Beaverbank West interchange; Trunk 4 widening and paving from East Bay westerly to Big Pond; National highway system pavement rehabilitation and safety improvements; Highway 103 pavement rehabilitation; Phase 1 of bridge rehabilitation and construction; Highway 111 Mount Hope interchange at Highway 11 to connect to Woodside Industrial Park; Highway 102 Larry Uteck interchange

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What's online today.

Video Boy who gave bone marrow to save his brother hailed as a hero at metronews.ca/canada

Video Jim Flaherty vows to work with the provinces to revive the economy at metronews.ca/canada

Lotteries

Lotto 6/49: 11, 18, 22, 28, 30 & 49 Bonus 25
These results are not official.

There's a new express bus from Wolfville to Waterville for Michelin shift workers. If all 1,200 Michelin employees took the bus to work, it would save 165 tonnes a year of greenhouse gas — the equivalent of taking 35 cars off the road. **METRO HALIFAX**



KAMIA CREELMAN/FOR METRO HALIFAX

CopShop brings smiles

Officers and kids team up for a holiday shopping spree

KAMIA CREELMAN
for Metro Halifax

Halifax cops traded in their guns and badges to become personal shoppers yesterday. The Halifax Shopping Centre hosted its fourth annual CopShop, where 50 cops were teamed with 50 local kids, armed with \$200 gift certificates, and let loose in the mall for two hours.

The

spree started with a pizza party and a visit from Santa. Then the kids grabbed their cops and scattered in search of perfect caps, oversized hoodies, "sick" sneakers and, most importantly, video games.

One of the teams, Const.

"I love this program."

Angela Chaisson

Ray Turner, 31, and Vince Cain, 10, were serious, strategic shoppers. Heads together, they calculated risks and rewards. Cain, a talented basketball player, worried about

adding a second, half-price pair of basketball sneakers when he still hadn't bought an X-box controller.

"Big decisions, man," Turner said.

After the spree, the cops were loaded up like mules and the kids were dragging around proud, exhausted grins.

"I love this program," Angela Chaisson, 29, said, as she watched her son Nathan manoeuvre his cop and his bags of presents through the busy mall.

In true Christmas spirit, when the shopping was over and everyone was gathering for a group photo, Turner slipped away from his buddy, back into crowd to buy the one video game Cain couldn't quite afford.

The kids who participated in CopShop were chosen because of need, or to recognize academic or sports achievement. CopShop originated in Halifax in 2005, but has spread nationwide. Four hundred Canadian kids will shop with a cop this season.

Halifax Regional Police Const. Nathan Cross and his young buddy deliberate buying sneakers at Halifax Shopping Centre's fourth annual CopShop shopping spree.

News in brief

PENSIONS New Glasgow is the only town in the county that forces its taxpayers to foot the bill to ensure some members of council get a pension cheque. And that's the way it's going to stay. Coun. Terry Curley brought a motion to council Monday night, asking members to ditch their own pension plan. His motion was voted down 4-3. According to the Municipal Government Act, council has the option to establish a pension plan

for the mayor or councillors or both. Those who opt into the plan must make financial contributions. That money is matched by the town and comes out of taxpayer's pockets. The surrounding towns of Westville, Stellarton, Trenton, Pictou, Antigonish and Truro do not offer pensions to their councillors.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Colchester CD retailer to close doors for good

Colchester County's only specialized retail CD music store will close its doors next week.

On Tuesday, officials at the Winnipeg-based CD Plus head office confirmed their Truro Mall location will close permanently on Dec. 24.

"We are closing it because we can't make a go of it anymore," said Dale Bially, vice-president of opera-

tions for CD Plus. "A couple years ago, Wal-Mart came to the market and they deep discounted all of the products we make profit off of and our bottom line was skimmed off, so the store is no longer viable."

When the store closes Christmas Eve, two full-time and three part-time employees will be out of work.

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An illness may force 25 horses from their homes

JON TATTRE
for Metro Halifax

A mystery ailment has been making horses at Bengal Lancers sick, forcing the downtown Halifax barn to consider moving all 25 animals out of the city.

A notice posted at bengallancers.com on Monday warned that "the horses must move out of this stable, at least temporarily." But a Tuesday night board meeting heard from veterinarians who said the horses can stay put while further testing is carried out. The vets said the horses are suffering from inflammatory airway disease, likely from the gas ammonia, which comes from horse urine.

"We have experts coming from Michigan State

"Things are pretty quiet in the barn right now. That's a good thing."

Jill Barker, barn manager

University on the first of January and they will tell us for sure the permanent solution," barn manager Jill Barker said yesterday "Nobody's dying — they've had a cough and it hasn't gotten better."

"Quite a few" of the 25 horses had been affected, she said. "It's risky ... long-term; it's not good if you have an insult to lung tissue."

She's optimistic the American experts will find the precise cause and that it can be cleaned up without needing to move the horses.

The problem began with renovations in 2003. Win-

dows and doors in the barn were tightened up to stop drafts and that may have led to the air-quality problem. Barker said the ventilation system is "moving plenty of air, but not in the right places."

"This has cost us hundreds of thousands of dollars," she said. "We are non-profit and don't have the money to throw around. We are in some debt and now things are looking a little dire."

Temporary measures have been taken to protect the horses over Christmas. "Things are pretty quiet in the barn right now. That's a good thing," Barker said.

Homeowner finds three intruders

ARRESTS RCMP have charged three men with breaking into a house on the Conrad's Branch Road Tuesday at 4 p.m.

The homeowner was in the basement at the time when a loud noise attracted his attention. He ran upstairs to find three men inside the house, who fled to a white Honda outside. RCMP arrested a 21-year-old, a 19-year-old and a 17-year-old, and charged them with break-and-enter.

• Halifax Regional Police charged an 18-year-old with possession of ecstasy Tuesday night after a traffic stop on Purcell's Cove Road. From the same incident, a 41-year-old man faces a charge related to drug possession and a weapons offence, after he was allegedly discovered with a butterfly knife.

• Carrying pot in your car during the Christmas traffic-stop season is probably a bad idea. Police charged a 22-year-old man with possession of marijuana for the purpose of trafficking Tuesday night after an 8:45 p.m. traffic stop on Herring Cove Road.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Doing a little off-the-books construction work? Fess up quick

The Canada Revenue Agency is targeting companies in Atlantic Canada, but says it won't prosecute those that report their under-the-table business beforehand. **METRO HALIFAX**

local 5



Minister of Health Promotion Barry Barnett, from middle left, Mayor Peter Kelly and Defence Minister Peter MacKay turn some sod for the official ground-breaking ceremony for the Mainland Common Centre yesterday. The \$50.5-million centre will be ready for the 2011 Canada Winter Games.

Sports centre step closer to 'reality'

PAUL MCLEOD
paul.mcleod@metronews.ca

Flanked by man-sized, dancing woodland creatures, politicians broke ground for the Mainland Common Centre yesterday.

The \$50.5-million facility will be the centerpiece of Halifax's hosting the 2011 Canada Winter Games. The 176,000 square-foot complex will include a field house with three full-sized gymnasiums, an indoor 200-metre track, a pool and other resources. "This state-of-the-art facility will provide a much needed training venue for

"This new, state-of-the-art centre will help encourage more Nova Scotians to get active."

Health Promotion Minister Barry Barnett

our province's athletes," said Halifax 2011 Canada Games chair JP Deveau. "This facility will host three of our sporting events — synchronized swimming, badminton and artistic gymnastics."

The construction launch was a cold, snowy event. But that didn't stop a few dozen people, including

politicians from all three levels of government, from showing up.

A couple of active, furry mascots and songs by the Halifax West Jazz Band did their best to warm the crowd.

"We are one step closer to turning years of planning into reality," said Health Promotion Minister Barry Barnett.

"This new, state-of-the-art centre will help encourage more Nova Scotians to get active."

The facility will be located at the Mainland Common on Thomas Raddall Drive off Lacewood Drive. It's scheduled to be completed in fall of 2010.

Bar company files for creditor protection

DEBTS Slow business and rising costs have caused Argyle Cobblers Ltd., the company that owns The Economy Shoe Shop, the Seahorse Tavern, the Press Gang and the Marquee Club, to file for protection from creditors.

Victor Syperek, the company's owner and a onetime mayoral candidate, has filed a court application that lists \$555,107 in debts on 89 accounts. Despite that, he says, the bars will not be shutting down — they'll cut their hours.

"During the day, there's no point in having four bars open when you just have 80 customers. We just open according to however many people are in the place," Syperek said.

He said he doesn't know yet if there'll be job losses.

Luke Erjavec from the Canadian Restaurant and Food Services Association says times are tough for all restaurants in Halifax.

"The last several years have been really, really tough on the food service industry, particularly in the liquor sector. Liquor commission sales continue to climb and our sales continue to go down. We had a huge escalation in minimum wage, up 27 per cent in three years, and it cost the industry 20 million bucks," Erjavec said.

He says what happened to Syperek could happen to anyone else if business continues to go down.

Syperek thinks he'll bounce back. He says he'll be using this time to refigure his strategy on how to pay everyone back.

EDANA ROBITAILLE/FOR METRO HALIFAX

News in brief

FISHERIES Maritime fisheries ministers met late Tuesday with federal Fisheries Minister Gail Shea to discuss market challenges facing the industry. Fisheries and Aquaculture Minister Ron Chisholm was joined by provincial counterparts Rick Doucet from New Brunswick and Allan Campbell from Prince Edward Island. The ministers agreed to co-operate to expand markets and assist the industry through these tough times.

AWARDS The Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia hosted the 2008 Tourism Summit recently and 10 Crystal Tourism Awards of Excellence were presented to individuals and organizations that have excelled in their particular category. Oliver Bourque of Yarmouth, Joggins Fossil Cliffs, Wilfrid Creighton, Hillsdale House Inn, Ecology Action Centre, Nova Scotia Association of Chefs and Cooks, and Donald Wilson were among the winners. **METRO HALIFAX**



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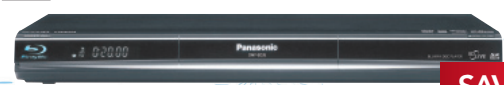
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Here's a reason to be glad you're not rich: StatsCan says the higher men's income, the more likely they are to be overweight. It's got something to do with how often wealthy men eat out. The pattern doesn't hold true for women, though. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Hospital death rates down

Doctors unsure of why fewer patients died in 2006-07

JENNIFER TAPLIN
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In this kind of report card, hospitals are hoping for the lowest scores.

Mortality ratios for hospitals across the country were released by the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI). The QEII and the Capital District Health Authority showed fewer deaths in 2006-07.

It's not cause for celebration, though, said Brendan Carr, the vice-president of medicine. The stats show they're doing something right, but they don't know what.

"This doesn't tell us where the deaths are occurring or any information on what might have caused the change we're seeing," he said.

"It's a high-level indicator that gives us a rough sense of how we're doing."

The health authority has other internal methods of collecting stats like these to determine how patients are faring.

"We're generally pleased that our trend seems to be improving, but we're not complacent about that,

and we're continually looking for ways to improve," Carr said.

The report brought up a few risk factors for patients dying in the hospital.

A few of them are obvious: age and diagnosis.

But one of them is surprising: being male.

According to CIHI, if you're male, the chances of dying in the hospital are nine per cent higher than if you're a woman.

"These are facts of life al-

most," Carr said.

"The fact is men die at a different rate than

women die," he said.

"Men tend to die earlier than women."



"Booyah!"

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RCMP blood drive gives gift of life

EDANA ROBITAILLE
for Metro Halifax

Nathalie Rathwell-Hardy almost always gets emotional when she talks about her daughter Elizabeth's fight for life.

Speaking at the launch of the RCMP Red Surge for Life campaign yesterday, she teared up again.

Elizabeth, now almost three years old, was diagnosed with biliary atre-

sia, a condition in newborns where the bile duct to the small intestine is either blocked or absent.

A repair surgery worked for a while, but an infection caused Elizabeth to bleed internally, and she needed blood transfusions.

She had 81 in total while she waited for a liver transplant, which she received in early 2007.

RCMP Cpl. Joe Taplin said more than 25 officers

across the province donated blood yesterday as part of the force's campaign for blood donations. Every donation of blood can save up to three lives.

Taplin said although many RCMP officers al-

ready donate blood, this is the first time they've banded together as a unit.

Peter MacDonald, director of donor and clinic services for the Atlantic Canada division of Canadian

Blood Services, says that donating blood is the one of the best ways to give to others this season.

"Canadians are finding it harder and harder to find money and time to help charities. That's why we are reminding people that giving blood is the recession-proof gift. The cost is free, it only takes about an hour and the benefits are immeasurable," MacDonald said.



Nathalie Rathwell-Hardy and her daughter Elizabeth are among the families who have benefited from blood donations. Rathwell-Hardy spoke at the launch of the RCMP's Red Surge For Life donation campaign to persuade officers to give blood.

Nova Scotia foreclosures increased from 2007 totals

PROPERTY A sign of the times perhaps? Foreclosures in the province are increasing.

The Justice Department issued 453 orders to foreclose in 2007-08.

There were 363 in 2006-2007.

These are orders where

the homeowner was given some time to raise enough money before the property is foreclosed, giving them a chance to save their homes.

In Halifax County, there were 138 orders in 2008 compared to 115 in 2007.

JENNIFER TAPLIN / METRO HALIFAX

Test results on Truro Raceway horses to be unveiled today

RACING Truro Raceway expects to hear from the Maritime Provinces Harness Racing Commission (MPHRC) on the status of horses at the Bible Hill facility says Truro Raceway secretary Joe Kelly.

Dr. Paul Hogan, director of racing for the MPHRC, said Tuesday he expected the results from tests conducted for strangles on two

standardbred horses would be known today.

Preliminary tests of two horses carried out on Dec. 7 came back inconclusive, resulting in the racing commission banning the movement of horses in and out of the raceway.

Some 40 horses were scratched from last Sunday's 13-dash program, contributing to a wager of about \$5,000, the lowest Sunday handle of the season. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Richmond County in 'sound financial shape', warden says

FINANCES The Municipality of Richmond's auditors say it is in good financial shape, but council is concerned about how the recession may affect the county and its people.

"The good news is that we are in very sound financial shape and we have a good outlook, in terms of being able to provide the services that we do pro-

vide," warden John Bourdieu said.

"If we can identify some major projects, we'll dig into our reserves and do some major projects over the next couple of years that help put shovels in the ground and jingle in the pockets."

Having a sound financial position enables a municipality to do that in a time of need, he added.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Cape Breton votes to support Lake Uist project assessment

POWER Cape Breton Regional Municipality council voted unanimously Tuesday night to support a call for a full-panel federal environmental assessment on the proposed wind and hydroelectric power project at Lake Uist.

The resolution to endorse a request for a review after Laurie Suitor of the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources presented environmental con-

cerns about the project.

A community group called the Save the Grand River Watershed Association has already requested a full panel review from the Department of Environment. Those concerns included carbon emissions, the death of plants and fish and whether the presence of turbines would result in methyl mercury contamination in the water. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

News in brief

HEALTH If your child has asthma and you're headed to the IWK Health Centre's emergency room, and he or she uses an inhaler with a spacer, bring it with you. Research shows a metered-dose inhaler, or puffer, using a spacer instead of an aerosol mask, is better for infection control. If you bring your spacer, that means the staff can

look it over to make sure it's working well and you're using it properly. For more info, call the IWK's emergency department at 470-8050.

TRAFFIC Heading to Windsor? Beware the construction on Highway 101, say RCMP. Westbound traffic on that highway has been cut to one lane in several spots.

METRO HALIFAX

More Americans overnighted in Canada
Americans, travelling by car and plane, made a million overnight trips to Canada in October 2008, up 0.7 per cent from September. That offset a two per cent drop in travel from overseas. Meanwhile, Canadians made 0.8 per cent fewer overnight trips to the U.S. **METRO HALIFAX**

Court refuses to reduce sentence

Man given 14 years for trying to kill wife

Knapp, who was four months pregnant, was sitting on the couch of the couple's Dartmouth apartment, reading What To Expect When You're Expecting, when Bryan began to stab her with a decorative sword.

She had to be revived

“One could hardly imagine a more vicious, planned and deliberate attempted murder committed in the context of a domestic relationship.”

Justice Jamie Saunders, writing on behalf of a three-judge panel

twice in the ambulance on the way to the hospital, suffering mild brain dam-

age.

The baby died, and Knapp had to move in with

her mother because she needed full-time care.

Bryan kept a diary where

he planned a murder-suicide, saying he wanted the baby to die, and that he planned to stab Knapp and then himself.

He was diagnosed with narcissistic personality disorder, antisocial personality traits, and an addiction to cannabis.

RACHEL BOOMER
Metro Halifax

A Dartmouth man who stabbed his pregnant fiancée 15 times in the stomach, killing their unborn child, has lost his bid to have his jail term cut by more than half.

Alan Clayton Bryan was sentenced last February to 14 years behind bars for the July 31, 2007, attack on Charlene Knapp.

His lawyer argued the sentence was excessive, and said it should be cut to five or six years.

In a decision released yesterday, the Nova Scotia Court of Appeal disagreed, saying Bryan's sentence was justified in the "horri-fying" case.

"One could hardly imagine a more vicious, planned and deliberate attempted murder committed in the context of a domestic relationship," wrote Justice Jamie Saunders, on behalf of a three-judge panel.

"He set out to kill his common-law wife and came within a hair's breadth of doing so."

Suspect tried to lure child into his car

CRIME Halifax Regional Police are looking for a 30- to 40-year-old man who tried to lure an 11-year-old girl into

his car near John MacNeil School in Dartmouth yesterday afternoon.

At 2:20 p.m., a man with a beard, brown eyes and wearing a dark jacket ordered a passing girl to "get in the

car."

The girl ran to a house and contacted police. She wasn't hurt.

METRO HALIFAX

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Talks aimed at averting a strike at some Pacific Coast ports are progressing slowly, a representative of the employers said yesterday. Foremen in Vancouver and Prince Rupert, B.C., will be in a legal strike position as of Jan. 2, but the union and employers are scheduled to meet with a mediator again tomorrow. **REUTERS**

Canada



Unusual ice led to collapse

An unusual buildup of ice likely caused the collapse of a gondola tower that stranded more than 50 skiers in mid-air at Whistler, B.C., officials said yesterday. A preliminary investigation discovered that water had leaked into the tower at the Whistler Blackcomb resort. The water then froze, creating a condition called "ice jacking," which caused the structure to fail on Tuesday. **REUTERS**

Naked woman uninjured by fall from balcony

EDMONTON A man out for a smoke got the shock of a lifetime when a naked woman fell from the sky yesterday morning. The 19-year-old woman fell from a third-floor balcony of an apartment building and landed at the feet of a man standing outside. Though she was miraculously uninjured, police believe she may have been the victim of a domestic dispute, and was possibly on drugs. **METRO CANADA**

News in brief

EDUCATION As the work slows in the oilsands, enrolment in trade schools in Newfoundland and Labrador is booming, CBC News Online reports, as workers return home to upgrade their skills.

LEGAL BATTLE Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Danny Williams told CBC yesterday that if AbitibiBowater wants to start a legal fight, it is welcome to try, but he insists his government has the power to expropriate the company's assets in the province. Williams was responding to the threat of legal action over the expropriation of the company's provincial assets. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**



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Finance ministers agree on economic stimulus

Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty and his provincial counterparts agreed yesterday on a joint pro-growth plan which includes accelerating spending on urban reconstruction, better support for workers and freeing up bank credit for Canadian businesses and consumers.

Flaherty said Ottawa must open its coffers to pump money into the economy to soften the impact of the recession, but said it is too early to say how big the planned stimulus package would be. Economic growth next year will decline by 0.4 per cent, he said.

Ontario Finance Minister Dwight Duncan, who sharply criticized Flaherty in the private meetings, welcomed the agreement in principle on federal-provincial action. But "we really didn't deal with what I would call the substantive, tough issues," he told the media.

The hard questions are what kind of economic stimulus is most effective, what kind of infrastructure investments are best and "how do you get the



Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty talks with the media yesterday after an all-day meeting with the provincial and territorial finance ministers in Saskatoon, Sask.

money into the ground" quickly, he said. Duncan noted that Ontario signed a major agreement on infrastructure spending with Ottawa in July "and not one dollar has flowed."

Flaherty said the ministers are aware of the need to move quickly with infrastructure projects. He said Ottawa and the provinces are going to put together a list of projects that "are ready to go across Canada" after the budget, "so that the stimulus will be effective." He

\$5B deficit

- Finance Minister Jim Flaherty used the meeting as an opportunity to admit for the first time that the economy would retract next year and that Ottawa would run a budget deficit in 2009 of at least \$5 billion.

said Ottawa's infrastructure spending next year will probably exceed the \$6 billion already promised.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Chrysler to shut manufacturing plants for at least one month

AUTO Citing a credit crisis and dwindling sales, Chrysler LLC yesterday said it would shut down all of its manufacturing operations in Canada at the end of this week for at least a month.

The shutdown, also affecting plants in the United States and Mexico, marked a deepening of the financial crisis for the U.S. auto industry and came as Chrysler and its larger rival General Motors Corp. both seek to shore up cash as they seek a federal bailout they say they need to survive.

Chrysler, considered the weakest of the Detroit automakers, made the shutdown announcement in a letter sent yesterday to its employees, suppliers and unions that was also posted on its website.

Chrysler said its dealers were getting shoppers into showrooms, but losing between 20 and 25 per cent of

Bailout

- The proposed \$3.4 billion auto-industry bailout from Ontario and Ottawa is just the beginning of help for the troubled Detroit Three, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty acknowledged yesterday. "This is a bit of a lifeline at this point in time to sustain the industry," the premier said as the White House in Washington continued to mull the size of an aid package for General Motors, Ford and Chrysler. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

potential sales because of the lack of consumer financing for new purchases.

"As a result of the financial crisis, the automotive market remains depressed due to the continued lack of consumer credit," the automaker said in a statement. **REUTERS**

Ontario to get more seats in Parliament

POLITICS Prime Minister Stephen Harper is giving Ontario an early holiday gift — greater representation for the province in the House of Commons.

Under Harper's previous legislation, which died on the order paper before the Oct. 14 federal election, B.C. would have gained seven seats, Alberta five and Ontario 10 — less than half the 21 it's entitled to due to rising population numbers.

"I spoke to him about that and I think we've ... fixed it," Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty told reporters yesterday. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

"I spoke to him about that and I think we've ... fixed it."

Dalton McGuinty

Railway layoffs will cause safety problems: Union

Canadian Pacific Railway's unions yesterday blasted CPR's plan to lay off 600 workers, saying the move to cut maintenance costs as freight traffic slows will create safety problems. Most of the cuts that take effect this week and next involve engineers, conductors and other operating personnel. **REUTERS**

'Bold measures' will work, Bank of Canada says

Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney said yesterday that 2009 would be difficult for many Canadians, but he cautioned against overplaying the "extreme scenario" of a possible collapse in household incomes.

"Partly as a consequence of financial instability, next year will be a trying one for many Canadians," he said in a speech. "While the Canadian household sector remains relatively healthy, its resilience will be tested during the recession."

But Carney said measures taken in Canada and around the world were working their way through the system and would pull the economy out of the "full-blown financial crisis" it is in.

"Policy-makers have had

to respond with bold measures. These will work, although it will take time for confidence to return and for capital to flow once again."

The focus on the Canadian central bank was sharper yesterday after the U.S. Federal Reserve lowered its benchmark rate to near zero on Tuesday.

"It will take time for confidence to return."

Mark Carney

The Bank of Canada has obviously studied non-conventional measures other than rate cuts, Carney said. The bank's overnight target rate is at 1.5 per cent, so it still has a little room left for cuts.

"We continue to do contingency plans at the bank," he told a business audience in Toronto. "We're very up to speed on scenarios ... but it's premature to talk about that."

REUTERS

Christmas Town **Best decorated**



Michael Williams, from left, Charles Williams, family friend Todd Tesolin, and neighbour Horst Ritschel pose for a photo on the front lawn of the Williams' family home in Pickering, Ont. The Williams family has won Pickering's "best decorated home" award three times for their Griswold-style display of lights and festive-season icons that cover their home and front lawn.

Ignatieff meets with Charest, begins to woo Quebec

POLITICS New federal Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff is wasting no time in trying to re-establish relations with the provincial Liberals as he prepares to win back the hearts and minds of Quebecers.

Ignatieff called Premier Jean Charest the afternoon of the Quebec election last week to wish the provincial leader luck. That call came two days before Tory Prime Minister Stephen Harper called Charest.

Then, yesterday, Ignatieff travelled to Quebec City to pay a "courtesy visit" to Charest. They spoke about Charest's demands from Ottawa and the budget that will be unveiled next month. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

News in brief

CALGARY An Alberta man has been sentenced to 30 days in jail for torturing his family's dog in October 2006. Daniel Haskett, now 21, pled guilty to causing unnecessary suffering to an animal and obstruction of justice. **METRO CANADA**

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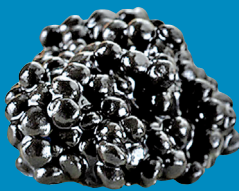
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Four years after polarizing Americans with its take on racial bigotry and stereotypes, Oscar-winning movie Crash is enjoying life as a TV series that has divided critics. Crash the TV series comes from Canadian Paul Haggis. The 13-episode series has been found by some critics to lack the intensity of the movie. **REUTERS**

World



Fake luxury for tough times

If your hedge fund has collapsed and the bank foreclosed on your mansion because of the global recession, don't worry, you can still toast the new year with caviar. Well, fake caviar. Waitrose supermarket chain in Britain is selling something it calls Arenkha MSC with a similar texture and taste to the much-prized sturgeon roe but at a fraction of the price. It says it combines "smoked herring with squid ink, lemon juice and spices." **REUTERS**

Cobblers claim credit for shoes

Shoemakers seeking publicity after Bush incident in Iraq

Across the Middle East, rival shoemakers have claimed it was they who created the footwear flung at U.S. President George W. Bush by an angry Iraqi and immortalized by TV cameras.

For many, reporter Muntazer al-Zaidi is a hero for the attack on Bush, and some of the glory seems to have rubbed off on the shoes that almost connected with the presidential head.

Suggestions have been

Hero's reward?

• An Egyptian man said yesterday he was offering his 20-year-old daughter in marriage to Iraqi journalist Muntazer al-Zaidi, who threw his shoes at U.S. President

George W. Bush in Baghdad on Sunday. The man's daughter said she agreed with the proposal, declaring that it would "honour" her to marry Zaidi.

made that they came from cobblers in China, Turkey or Lebanon.

But yesterday, Zaidi's brother dismissed such reports, saying they came from the Baghdad factory

of Iraqi shoemaker Alaa Haddad, viewed as among the country's best.

Turkish newspaper Yeni Safak reported Turkish businessman Ramazan Baydan had made the

shoes and carried a front-page picture of the design, alongside the headline Made in Turkey.

Baydan said he designed the style in 1999, and orders from Iraq had increased by 100 per cent since the Bush incident.

The Lebanese newspaper as-Safir bore a front-page photo showing Zaidi during a visit to Beirut in November with an accompanying headline: Did He Buy the Shoes in Beirut?

REUTERS

Relatives of Russian bus crash victims arrive in Israel

FATALITIES Relatives of Russian tourists injured in a bus crash arrived in Israel yesterday as officials prepared to fly the bodies of the 24 who died back to St. Petersburg.

The 49 Russians, part of a group of tour operators, had been in Israel only a few hours on Tuesday for a training trip when their bus travelling from Ovda airport veered off a desert road near the Red Sea resort city of Eilat and plunged down a ravine.

The bodies of the dead will be flown back to St. Petersburg today, the Israeli Magen David Adom ambulance service said.

Transport Minister Shaul

Popular spot

• Israel is a favourite destination for Russian tourists. Some 230,000 Russians visited the country in the first nine months of 2008, and the tourism ministry expects the number to rise to 400,000 in 2009.

Mofaz said the crash occurred as the driver, who was injured but was being questioned by police, tried to overtake another bus.

Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said the investigation was focusing on whether the bus driver lost control of his vehicle.

REUTERS

Arrested mob boss hangs himself in Italian prison

SUICIDE A suspected Mafia boss arrested on Tuesday in a high-profile police swoop has hung himself in his prison cell, police sources said yesterday.

Gaetano Lo Presti, who was already convicted of mob-related crimes prior to his latest arrest, was found dead late last night in Pagliarelli prison in the Sicilian capital of Palermo. He was one of the 99 people apprehended on Tuesday suspected of trying to

rebuild the top ranks of the Sicilian Mafia, which has been weakened by the arrests of powerful mob leaders.

About 1,200 police, backed by helicopters and anti-drug units, carried out the latest round of arrests. Lo Presti and the other suspects were accused of crimes including extortion, trafficking of arms and drugs and having mafia links.

REUTERS

State court rejects effort to remove governor from post

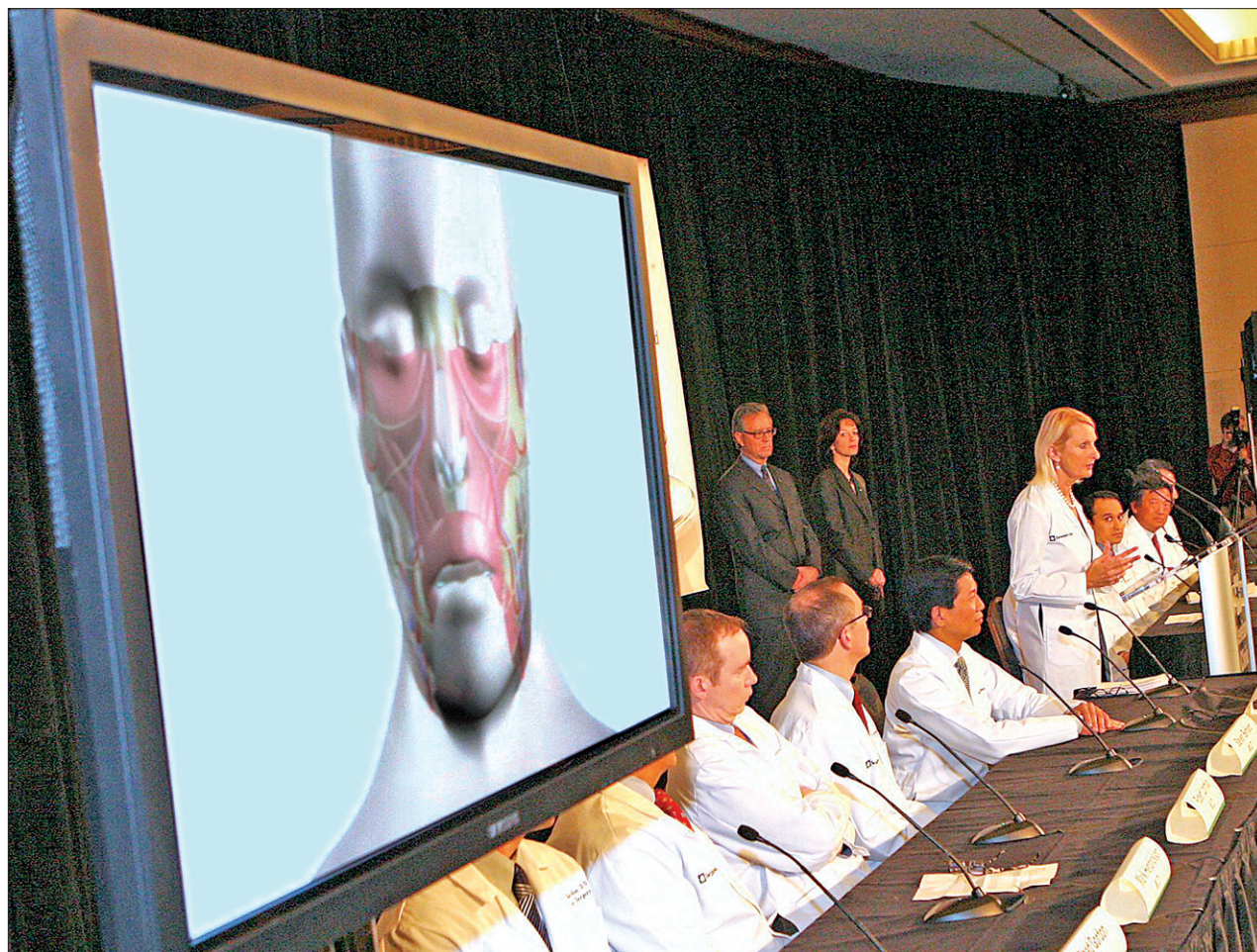
INVESTIGATION The Illinois Supreme Court yesterday denied a request that embattled Gov. Rod Blagojevich be temporarily removed from office amid charges he tried to sell president-elect Barack Obama's old U.S. Senate seat.

The ruling, issued without comment, came as Blagojevich began fighting efforts in the state legislature to impeach him.

Attorney General Lisa Madigan had asked the court to use a never-tested provision allowing the governor to be removed for disability, saying that the

charges against him placed him in that category.

The Senate seat at the centre of the scandal remained unfilled, with Blagojevich holding the sole power to fill it but not acting in the face of suspicion that any choice would now be tainted. **REUTERS**



Maria Siemionow, standing at podium, talks to the media about the surgeons team that performed the first U.S. near-total face transplant in the past two weeks in Cleveland, Ohio, yesterday.

First U.S. patient undergoes face transplant

SCIENCE Surgeons have replaced 80 per cent of a woman's face, transplanting bone, teeth, muscle and nerve in the first such operation in the United States.

They said the woman suffered severe trauma that cost her an eye, much of her nose and her upper jaw and left her unable to breathe, smell, taste or smile properly.

Ohio's Cleveland Clinic, which oversaw the opera-

"Our hopes are ... that she will be able to smile again."

Francis Papay

tion, gave no details about the woman, how she was injured, or who the donor was.

"We transferred the skin, all the facial muscles in the upper face and mid-face, the upper lip, all of the nose, most of the sinuses around the nose, the upper jaw including the

teeth, the facial nerve," said Francis Papay, the chair of dermatology and plastic surgery at the clinic. "Our hopes are ... that she will be able to smile again."

Some controversy has surrounded the issue of face transplants, in part because face injuries are

not seen as life-threatening. But in this case, the doctors said, the patient had virtually no life because of her injury.

"We know that there are so many patients there in their homes where they are hiding from society because ... they are afraid to go the the street," said Dr. Maria Siemionow, director of plastic surgery research. "Our patient was called names and was humiliated." **REUTERS**

News in brief

GREECE Protesters hung banners from the Acropolis in Greece yesterday and called for demonstrations across Europe

in the 12th day of unrest since police shot dead a 15-year-old boy.

REUTERS

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Comment & Views

Comment

Case of musical chairs

Canada now a shadow of its former self on world stage

Home&Abroad

Andrew Cohen

Canada & world insight

From Lawrence Cannon comes word that Canada is “actively campaigning” for a seat on the United Nations Security Council beginning in 2011.

Cannon made the announcement — if that is what it was — at a diplomatic forum in Quebec City yesterday. Reuters treated it as news. For Canadians who fear their country has gone missing in the world, maybe it is.

News? It's news that we are “pursuing” a seat that we have held, once a

decade, since the founding of the United Nations in 1945? It's news that we are mounting a campaign to assume our traditional role as one of the 10 rotating non-permanent members of the council?

If that's news, it's because Canada's stature has fallen so far that last spring Ottawa had considered *not* running for a seat traditionally considered ours. If we were not going to win it, the government felt, why risk the embarrassment of losing?

We are now a country that's a shadow of its former self in the world, which must labour mightily to win a seat on the Security Council. The fear in

Ottawa is that Canada won't have the votes in the General Assembly when the election is held in 2010.

Much has to do with a loss of support in Africa, where we no longer have the presence in development assistance that we did. Indeed, some say that we have abandoned Africa.

This time the two open seats may likely to go Portugal or to Germany, which has been mounting a well-organized campaign.

Incidentally, Cannon is the Minister of Foreign Affairs. You can be forgiven if you don't know this because it's unlikely the world does, as well.

This isn't his fault; Cannon is intelligent, thought-

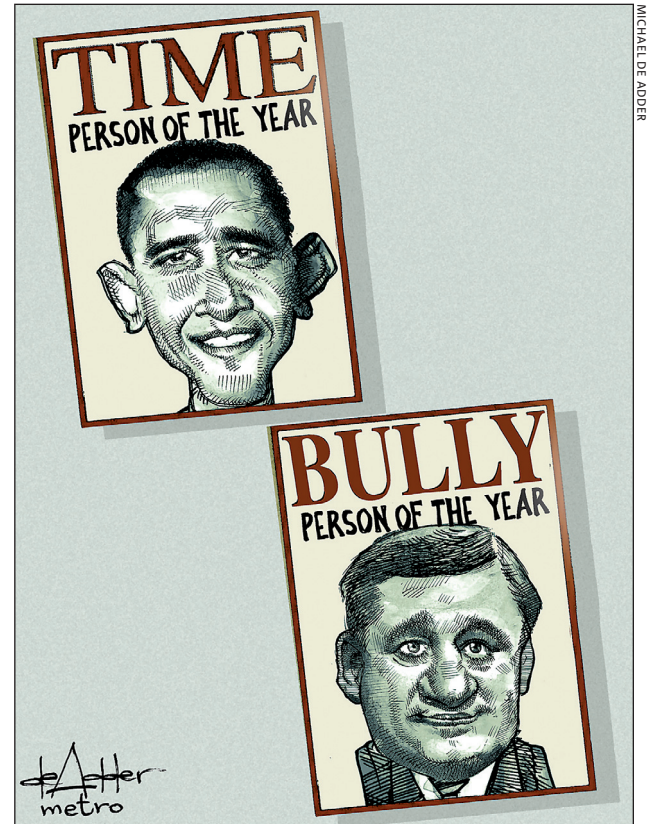
ful and articulate in both official languages. The problem is Cannon is Canada's fourth foreign minister since the Conservatives took office in February 2006. He has been preceded by Peter MacKay, Maxime Bernier and David Emerson.

Changing ministers like changing shirts isn't new; since Lester Pearson left the position in 1957, Canada has had a different foreign minister about every two years. The terms are getting shorter.

This suggests a country without commitment, which simply isn't serious about the world anymore. And that's why we are now chasing a seat on the Security Council, and why that is news in Canada.

Andrew Cohen teaches journalism at Carleton University. He is the author of *Extraordinary Canadians: Lester B. Pearson*.

This suggests a country without commitment, which simply isn't serious about the world anymore.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Letters

Automakers aren't the only industry in need of aid

I am extremely saddened to see the amount of attention the automotive-industry bailout is getting in the media. It is understandable that most people want to keep the many jobs being held down by those in southern Ontario, yet I rarely see the devastating news of layoffs and mill closures in smaller communities like Kenora, Ont., Dryden, Ont., Thunder Bay, Ont., Terrace Bay, Ont., and Fort Frances, Ont., over the past few years.

For Dryden, a one-industry town, the continued cutting of staff and the permanent shutdown of its paper machine this year leaves many wondering about the stability of the town. Many teenagers who leave to attend college and university never come back as there are few jobs to be had in their field.

Yes, these towns are considerably smaller than the giant cities in southern Ontario, but deserve just as much attention by our governments and media than they have been receiving.

Perhaps if more was done to create and keep the existing jobs, many wouldn't

be forced to leave and go to other parts of the country to earn their living.

VICKI WALCHUK, TORONTO

Canadian Afghan troops deserve more credit

It would be nice if our Canadian troops in Afghanistan got a little more credit for the hard and dangerous work they are doing.

Since 9-11, it seems Canada is the only country that is taking the job seriously of repairing Afghanistan and rooting out the Taliban and al-Qaida. Yet despite our seven-year effort, nobody on the international stage seems to be giving Canadians any credit for our excellent job in anti-terrorism.

Even with the RCMP preventing the Toronto 18 from conducting its alleged terrorist plans, there seems to be no credit from other nations on how we prevented a terrorist attack from happening in the first place.

I honestly think nations like the United States and Great Britain could learn a thing or two from Canadians on how to handle terrorism.

GEOFFREY DONOVAN STINES, TORONTO

Views

Getting better child care: It's the policy, stupid



Martha Friendly

A new study of early childhood education and care in 25 countries ranked Canada in last place, tied with Ireland, behind the U.S., Australia and Mexico.

While other evidence has long shown Canada to be a laggard on child care, UNICEF's study — the first to use measurable outcomes — has motivated Canadians to ask, “Why are we doing so poorly?” The study offers a plain answer: “It's the policy, stupid,” paraphrasing former U.S. president Bill Clinton's campaign slogan.

Two key developments drove the study. First, most children in affluent countries now have mothers

working outside the home; 75 per cent of mothers of three- to five-year-olds are in the labour force in Canada.

Second, abundant research shows that young children — especially older preschoolers and more vulnerable children — benefit from good quality early childhood education (ECEC).

UNICEF observes that these developments converge: Access to good quality not only enhances a child's well-being and development with long-term social and economic returns, but is also a key strategy for responding to immediate economic challenges such as parents' access to employment, reduction of de-

pendence on social programs, strengthening local economies and job creation.

The study bases its rankings on 10 benchmarks that build upon Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child that states, “The best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.”

The rankings tell the public policy story. None of the six poorest ranking countries has a national plan for ECEC. The six top countries met most of the benchmarks, including public financing of at least one per cent of GDP while the poorest ranked countries met very few. The benchmark ratings show that public policy “in the best interests

It's no wonder that UNICEF has called on Canada for a public policy response.

of children” means that a national policy and adequate financing are linked to good access to quality ECEC programs and go hand-in-hand with better parental leave, lower child poverty rates and better health indicators for young children.

It's no wonder that UNICEF has called on Canada for a public policy response — “the federal government must take the lead ... with solutions presented to the public by July 2009.” A good beginning to this would be funds for child care in the January federal budget followed by development of a robust ECEC policy framework that meets the needs of families and children.

Canada should do no less.

Martha Friendly is the executive director of the Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

It's your turn to tell others what you think. E-mail your thoughts and opinions to: halifaxletters@metronews.ca

Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number — street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

Business

EDITOR: FERMIN DESOUSA, FERMIN.DESOUSA@METRONEWS.CA

'Premature' to consider U.S.-style policy: Carney

ECONOMY Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney says it is "entirely premature" to talk about implementing in this country the kinds of unorthodox policy tools the Federal Reserve Board is preparing to wield after the U.S. central bank cut its key interest rate this week to virtually zero.

Reiterating that Canada has entered a recession that will persist into next year, Carney admitted in a noon-hour speech that the bank does "contingency planning" and has looked at these issues "for decades."

But he also said Canada's economy has "a number of fundamental strengths," including a functioning and well-capitalized financial system. While emphasizing that 2009 will be "a trying year," he suggested in his speech that there is a light at the end of the tunnel, but said that central bankers and government

"It is sometimes hard to see the end of the crisis, but end it will."

Mark Carney

shouldn't let down their guard.

"It is sometimes hard to see the end of the crisis, but end it will," Carney said, urging better early warning systems to detect future financial crises before they happen.

Last week, the Bank of Canada lowered its target for the overnight rate by three-quarters of a percentage point to 1.5 per cent, the lowest level in half a century.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

'Critical' flaw in Internet Explorer exposes 1.5M users

More than 1.5 million computer users around the globe may have been exposed to harmful software or viruses because of a "critical" security flaw in

Microsoft Corp.'s Internet Explorer, the most widely used web browser in the world.

The software giant yesterday took the unusual step of re-

leasing an unscheduled update, or patch, to protect customers using all supported versions of the software.

"This is a severe vulnerability," said Ben Greenbaum, a senior research manager for Symantec Security Response, which sells anti-virus software.

He added that Symantec's research showed a "significant" increase in hacker attacks over the past several days that aimed to exploit the flaw — a trend that likely pressured Microsoft to put a rush on its update.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The security flaw

How malware works

Unwitting Internet surfers can put their machines at risk by viewing a Web page that has been loaded with malicious software, or malware. That includes sites that have been created to host the harmful software, or legitimate sites that have been compromised by hackers. The malware is then downloaded without the users' knowledge, making it possible for hackers to control the machines remotely and use them to send out spam or distribute more malware.

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Oil firms feel squeeze as prices keep sliding

ECONOMY Producing heavy oil, much of which comes from the big oilsands deposits of northern Alberta, is a tough business and it's getting tougher.

The tar-like crude trades at a discount to lighter varieties. That wasn't a problem in July, when benchmark oil prices climbed above \$147 US a barrel, but after prices slid by more than \$100 US a barrel in the months that followed, some heavy oil producers are beginning to feel squeezed.

On Monday, small producer Connacher Oil and Gas Ltd. said it would restrict production of bitumen, a form of heavy oil, at its Great Divide thermal project in the oil sands to

5,000 barrels a day (bpd) from 9,000.

"Should oil prices continue to trade in the \$40 to \$50 range and differentials remain wide, then we will start to see more companies make a hard decision," said Menno Hulshof, an analyst at Dundee Securities. "I think it's inevitable."

Connacher said that prices are so low, it can no longer cover its costs and is unwilling to keep pumping out its reserves at a loss. Thermal operations such as Connacher's Great Divide project, in which steam is pumped into the ground to liquefy bitumen, are expensive to run with smaller firms more likely to make cuts.

REUTERS

BCE suing would-be buyers for fee

LEGAL Telecom giant BCE Inc. has sued its would-be buyers in a failed \$34.8-billion takeover agreement over the collapsed deal's \$1.2 billion breakup fee.

According to a court document filed in the province of Quebec and posted on BCE's website, the company says it's entitled to the money from the buyers — a group of private-equity firms led by the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan. The buyers have said neither side is owed a break fee as a result of the deal's collapse.

In its lawsuit, BCE asks the Superior Court that Teachers pay about \$704 million of the total.

REUTERS

Business in brief

MARKETS The Toronto Stock Exchange and the small-cap TSX Venture Exchange are expected to re-open today after a system fault linked to data feeds shut down both markets for the whole session yesterday. It's the longest forced outage since 1997.

OIL Oil prices dropped three per cent yesterday after OPEC announced a record supply cut that dealers said may fail to offset slumping world energy demand. Eager to push the price of oil back up, OPEC said it will cut 2.2 million barrels per day starting Jan. 1, the biggest single reduction on record.

REUTERS

THE DAILY BUSINESS BUZZ

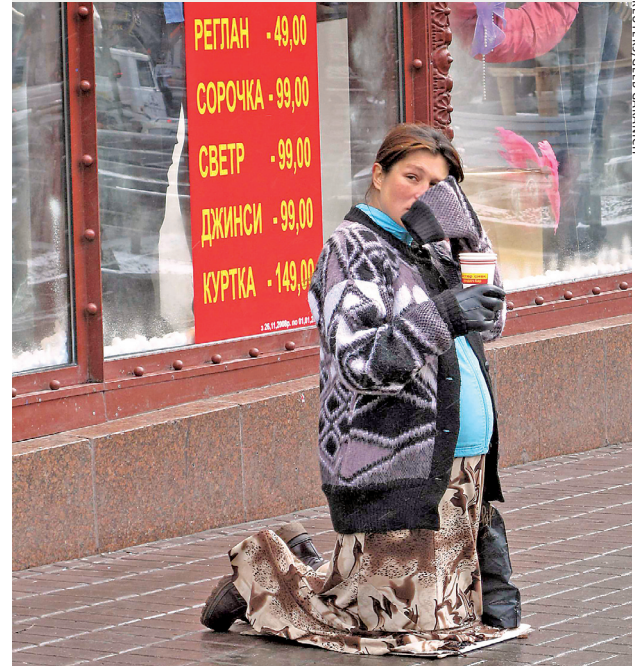
Wood pellet plant meeting: Annapolis Digby Economic Development Agency has scheduled a second meeting to allow continued public participation in developing financing, organization and equipment options of a wood pellet plant in the region. For more information, visit annapolisdigby.com.

Financing for immigrants: The provincial government says immigrants new to Nova Scotia can soon get down to business with the help of the new Immigrant Small Business Financing Program, which offers immigrants, who have lived in Nova Scotia less than five years, up to \$150,000 to help start, expand or buy a small business. The pilot program will be available through credit unions across Nova Scotia.

Killam acquires The James: Killam Properties Inc. announced yesterday it has acquired The James, a new 108-unit luxury apartment building in Halifax for a purchase price of \$21.3-million. Construction of the 10-storey building was completed in July of 2008. The James is located in Halifax's South End with average rents of \$1,379 per month.

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Ukraine Consumers struggling



A pregnant woman begs for money in central Kiev yesterday. Ukrainian consumers could default on 60 per cent of their debt obligations with a hryvnia currency rate of nine to the dollar, an aide to President Viktor Yushchenko said yesterday.

REUTERS/GILLES GARANICH

Give the gift of memory

The Philips and Swarovski Active Crystals line includes the Lock Out USB Key, right. The key retails at \$210 for 1G of data (about 250 songs or 1,000 photos). Go to active-crystals.com for more. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**



Holiday Shopping Guide V

SPECIAL FEATURES EDITOR: STEPHANIE BOMBA, STEPHANIE.BOMBA@METRONEWS.CA

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"Toffee" Tini Puppini doll, \$34.99, by Spin Master. At Wal-Mart, Toys R Us, more.

#6 Rockin' and rollin'
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This plush rocking giraffe, \$59.99, is available at Winners stores across Canada.

#2 Hot holiday toys for him
Visit: bakugan.com
Bakugan Battle Brawlers, \$5.49-\$24.99. At Wal-Mart, Toys R Us, and more.

#7 Monkeying around
Phone: 1-888-633-5833
Visit: GrassrootsStore.com
Organic cotton-stuffed monkeys, \$29.99.

#3 Jingle bell rock 'n' roll
Visit: cbc.ca/kids
Mamma Yamma and Friends CD, \$19.99 at chapters-indigo.ca.

#8 Make music
Visit: toyexpress.ca
Amazing Animals Spinnin' Around Musical Zoo by Fisher-Price, \$60.

#4 Fun and educational
Visit: beezibeez.com
This spelling game, \$29.99, is available at barnesandnoble.com.

#9 For a good cause
Visit: ikea.ca
Soft toys, from \$2.99-\$14.99 (\$1.58 goes to Unicef and Save the Children).

#5 Help them get active
Visit: m2universe.com
Kids can play Me2, \$36.95, once they earn points through physical activity.

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#2

#2

Lightweight tool kit

Visit: homedepot.ca
Ryobi 4-Piece Lithium-ion Power Tool Kit, \$169. Includes Hybrid Saw.



#3

#4

Help him tune in

Visit: dewalt.com
DeWalt Cordless Job Site Radio, \$198. At Home Depot, home-based retailers.

#4

Hammer time

Phone: 1-800-567-7705
Visit: bostitch.com
Bostitch Graphite Mallet, \$55.99.

#5

Set 'em straight

Visit: utrdecorating.com
Hang & Level, \$19.99. Available at home-based retailers across Canada.

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Tinseltown treats



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#2



#3



#4



#5



#6

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Photo: Keith Cossey

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Holiday Shopping Guide V



#7

#8

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Twin pocket knot bag in aubergine, \$400. Available at m0851's online store.

#2

Tasty tea treats

Visit: languageoftheleaf.com
Bombay Chai tea in elegant white tin, \$10.99. More under "Gifts" on site.

#3

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Phone: 1-800-363-8737
Visit: tilley.com
Tilley's Travel Jersey Wrap, \$79. Also in black and red.

#4

For the stylist

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#5

Dazzle her

Visit: bananarepublic.ca
Bib necklace, \$98. Available at Banana Republic.

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Goody for her

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#7

For the supermama

Visit: mamamio.com
Mama Mio SuperMama Kit, \$85. Available exclusively at The Bay.

#8

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Holiday Shopping Guide V

Top gifts for every techie

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CELLPHONES: Apple iPhone 3G
(\$199 with a three-year contract)

LG Vu
(\$79.99 with a three-year Rogers contract)

Blackberry Bold

Samsung Jack Merlot
(\$24.99 with a three-year Rogers contract)

Nokia E71
(\$99 with a three-year Rogers contract)

Motorola Rokr
(\$49 with a three-year Rogers contract)

Nokia 5310 XpressMusic
(\$19.99 with a three-year Rogers contract)

There's an almost endless range of cellphones on the market these days, and an equally endless number of things you can do with

your phone, depending on how much you're willing to spend on service plans. One thing's for sure, though: it's almost impossible to find one that won't take pictures or play music.

At the top of everyone's wish list is the **iPhone** — the most addictive phone ever to hit the market, thanks to its wildly responsive touch screen and the wild selection of software available through iTunes' app store.

Never mind that if you use the phone as much as it wants you to, you have to recharge the thing every night — it's a computer even more than a cellphone.

LG's Vu is a sort of iPhone lite — a similarly sleek touch screen phone with an icon-based interface.

An especially nice touch is the shutter for the camera — placed on the side, roughly where you'd expect to find it on a real camera.

The **Blackberry Bold** is among the widest on the market, a boon for text and e-mail fiends with big thumbs.

Like the iPhone, the Bold has a full range of features, but it's all work, and little play — the way it requires that you go two clicks into the menu to turn on the keypad lock is an example of the rigorous relationship Blackberry users have with their phones.

The **Samsung Jack** is another handful of a phone, running Windows Mobile with a full QWERTY keyboard.

Mobile isn't a supremely

elegant operating system, but it has the advantage of working well with your computer, and the comfort level of putting everything in the same place even when you change phones.

Nokia's slick, solid **E71** is the narrowest of the trio, and might prove a bit awkward for bulky digits.

It also uses Nokia's own OS, which takes some time to get comfy with.

The **Motorola Rokr** is a pretty phone, and impressively built, with a nice haptic touch interface — essential for a sleek candybar phone with no buttons.

The software and the small screen make it the least user-friendly of the bunch, however.

But rumour has it the company is actively working to overcome this failing. Finally, **Nokia's 5310** is a small but handy phone if you eschew text and e-mail but want to leave your mp3 player at home.

You're going to need a 4GB MicroSD card to make that work, although the phone's nominal cost makes that more than affordable.

MINI COMPUTERS: Toshiba Portege R600
(\$3,299)

Dell Mini 9
(\$349)

The day of the monster laptop is ending, with the

larger members of the species taking up permanent residence in homes as "desktop replacements," while lighter, nimbler run-about models are taking advantage of the era of USB keys and net storage and losing their disc drives.

On the high end is **Toshiba's R600**, a sort of AirBook for the PC world. A fully

featured Vista machine, it slims down both weight and battery

consumption thanks to a 128GB solid state hard drive, but still manages to include a DVD disc drive. There's an eSATA port and two USB slots for outboard memory storage, and a fingerprint reader for paranoid types.

Dell's Mini 9 is the chunkiest of the mini notebooks at 2.28 pounds, and runs XP on an Intel Atom chip on a 16GB solid state drive, though an Ubuntu Linux version is available with a 32GB SSD.

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19

Holiday Shopping Guide V

For the readers ...

BRIAN COULTON
for Metro Canada

This holiday season, travel to northern Ontario, India, into history and through the minds of the world's greatest achievers by stuffing one of these four books in the stocking of the book lover in your life.

Outliers: The Story of Success

Author: Malcolm Gladwell
Publisher: H.B Fenn & Company Ltd.
Price: \$30.99 (hardcover)

THE CANADIAN-RAISED author of *The Tipping Point* and *Blink* and staffer at *The New Yorker* examines the grounds for greatness in

Outliers: The Story of Success. In *Outliers*, Gladwell begs to relate why certain people are so much more successful

than the social norm. While considering factors like culture, birth year, geographic origin and social status, Gladwell identifies real examples to unlock the secrets to success. Among the cases examined, he probes what Mozart, The Beatles and Bill Gates share that made them successful, and the historical reason why Asian kids perform so much better in mathematics than other children.

The Pitchfork 500

Editors: Scott Plagenhoef and Ryan Schreiber
Publisher: Simon & Schuster Canada
Price: \$18.99 (paperback)

FROM DAVID BOWIE'S pared down, post-Ziggy

tune Heroes, through Björk's Homogenic homage to Iceland, Jóna, to Beirut's Balkan love ballad Postcards from Italy, The Pitchfork 500 picks the top songs "from punk to the present" perfect for the music snob in your life. Assembled by six editors and 38 contributors, and divided by year segments, The Pitchfork 500 provides the genre-spanning back-stories to some of music's greatest songs and artists. Interspersed with niche genre capsules like "Grindcore: Ten Skatepunk Greats" and "Bootybass", the comprehensive guide contains a euphonically assorted selection that will both entertain and educate even the elitist of audiophiles.

the pitchfork500

Slumdog Millionaire

Author: Vikas Swarup
Publisher: Harper Perennial
Price: \$17.95 (paperback)

WHEN AN UNLIKELY, uneducated young man from the slums of Mumbai walks away with the top prize on ante-upped game show *Who Will Win a Billion?*, there's cer-

tain suspicion his talent for trivia must be the result of cheating. But 18-year-old waiter Ram Mohammad Thomas insists he just knew the answers. In *Slumdog Millionaire* (originally published as Q&A), Thomas animatedly

relives his past to convince a lawyer just how a teen that never read a newspaper went from slumdog to stinking rich. Sparkling and smart, *Slumdog Millionaire* bridges class and virtue in a touching, modern image of India. The book was adapted to film this year by *Trainspotting* director Danny Boyle and won the People's Choice Award at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Through Black Spruce

Author: Joseph Boyden
Publisher: Viking Canada
Price: \$34 (hardcover)

MEET WILL BIRD. He's the Cree native bush pilot who's found himself in a coma after drunkenly crashing his plane. Meet Annie Bird. She's Will's niece who is consumed by locating her supermodel sister Suzanne. While Will's experiences reflect an archaic Aboriginal way of life, Annie's speak to the modern state of native Canada. Like their generations, Annie and Will's stories seem like they're a world apart. But in *Through Black Spruce*, Joseph Boyden explores just how similar each character's quest to find his own identity is. Like two tales in one, 2008 Scotiabank Giller Prize winner *Through Black Spruce* contrasts Annie's desolate voyage to North American fashion capitals with Will's tempestuous past in finding the common bond of family.

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Holiday Shopping Guide V

Books for young minds

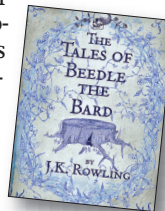
BRIAN COULTON
for Metro Canada

Fantastic quests, repulsive pests and a wizard's digest fill the pages of the books Metro recommends for kids this holiday season. Suited for children aged nine to 12, finding these tales under the tree will surely excite young readers on Christmas morning.

The Tales of Beedle the Bard

Author: J.K. Rowling
Publisher: Penguin Canada
Price: \$14.50 (hardcover)

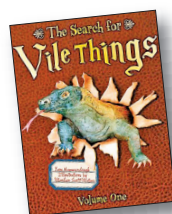
ONE YEAR AGO, J.K. Rowling auctioned off just seven handmade, self-illustrated copies of *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, her quintet of short children's stories. But this holiday season sees Rowling finally release the stories for mass publication. The Tales extend on the Harry Potter mania that shot Rowling to fame, offering a selection that acts to set up the final Potter publication, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Plus, added to the author's darkly imaginative writing is generous commentary by Albus Dumbledore that gives readers even deeper context to a collection of texts within a text.



The Search for Vile Things: Vol. 1

Author: Jane Hammerslough
Publisher: Scholastic Canada
Price: \$13.99 (hardcover)

FROM THE GROSS to the gripping, the first volume of *The Search for Vile*



explores nature's oddities from the East Indies. Guide Ephemera Churlyshe, her employee Tode and relatives Maldred, Wee Nettle and Rune navigate the landscape, discovering animals, natural disasters and human tendencies. Take the plunge to find the sea apple, an underwater creature that shoots poisonous strings from its behind to kill enemies. Or smell the corpse flower, an eight-foot, four-inch plant covered in insects that reeks of rotting meat. And, before you leave, be sure to try the stinkbug — it may smell bad, but it's edible and tastes smoky when roasted.

Timothy and the Dragon's Gate

Author: Adrienne Kress
Publisher: Scholastic Canada
Price: \$16.95 (hardcover)

USE YOUR BOOKSTORE gift cards to pick up the latest in the magical children's series by Torontonian Adrienne Kress when it hits stores on Jan. 13. Her novel follows Timothy, a problem child who's just been kicked out of the city's last school. But his biggest problem lies in Mr. Shen — an employee in the mailroom at his father's work. Mr. Shen holds a secret: he's really a dragon, condemned to a human's body until he traverses a Dragon's Gate at a year of the dragon festival. Timothy



must protect Mr. Shen as dragon from a host of villainous characters and, with newfound friend Alex, conquer adversary sea commander the Man in the Beige Linen Suit.

Frost Bites

Author: Charles Ogden
Publisher: Simon & Schuster Canada
Price: \$11.50 (hardcover)

THE NEWEST TALE in the illustrated Edgar and Ellen Nodyssey series is *Frost Bites*, a topical tale following the title twin siblings as they travel from home for the first time, just to find themselves skiing down their typically slippery slope of misbehaviour. In pursuit of their archenemy Stephanie Knightleigh, the two-some departs their native Nod's Limbs for the chilly village Frøsthaven. But when they arrive, they can't help but reminisce about home. The people and customs they encounter are strangely familiar because they remind them so pointedly of where Edgar and Ellen came from. But to find out why it's so similar, the pair must venture to unfriendly Glöggenheim where trouble is standing between them and their answer.



Next week's lineup

SHORT ON TIME? If you haven't started your shopping yet, pick up Metro on Dec. 24 for a roundup of the best in last-minute gift ideas.

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Davenport pregnant, to skip Aussie open

American tennis star Lindsay Davenport is withdrawing from the Australian Open because she is pregnant with her second child.

The former No. 1-ranked woman gave birth to a son, Jagger, in June 2007. Davenport hasn't played since the U.S. Open in August of this year. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

21

Sports



"There's just so many bloggers; everybody's got an opinion. Sometimes that starts forming the opinion of people in front offices, too, and owner."

Minnesota Timberwolves coach Kevin McHale, left, to the St. Paul Pioneer-Press on the stresses of coaching in the NBA today. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

SPORTS@METRONews.CA

Raptors blow another one

NBA RESULT**Mavericks 96 Raptors 86**

Dirk Nowitzki scored 27 points, grabbed 10 rebounds and doled out four assists to lead the Dallas Mavericks in a 96-86 victory over the Toronto Raptors last night.

Jason Terry notched season-highs with 27 points and eight assists for the Mavs, who are 5-1 over their last six road games. Josh Howard totaled 20 points in the win, Dallas' seventh in nine contests overall.

Jermaine O'Neal poured in a team-high 19 points for the Raptors, who have lost three straight and eight of 10.

Boos cascaded down from Toronto fans as the



Jason Terry celebrates after beating the Raptors. **REUTERS/MARK BLANCH**

Raptors blew what was a 13-point lead at one point.

The Raptors jumped out to a 33-21 lead after the first quarter and were up 49-44 at the half. Dallas outrebounded the Raptors, 47-37, the 20th

time in 24 games Toronto has been beaten on the boards. Toronto and Dallas split a pair of meetings last season, but the Mavericks have won nine of 10 and

12 of the last 14 in the series. Dallas has won four of five games at Air Canada Centre. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

2008: Senators' annus horribilis

Office it to say, there probably isn't a hockey team in the world that's as eager to close the book on 2008 more than your Ottawa Senators.

And there probably isn't a team in the NHL that needs to take a more serious look at itself and do something to change a baffling pattern of underachievement.

To be blunt, it has been an annus horribilis for the Senators. Talk about The Year of Playing Lousily.

With a 4-1 loss to the lowly Atlanta Thrashers — can they be considered lowly if they're only one place and three points behind? — Tuesday night, the Senators guaranteed they will have a sub-.500 record for the calendar year of 2008.

Even if they were to run the table for their final six games of the year, they would still find themselves one game under .500 in a league where .500 has become a joke because of the points teams get for losing in overtime and the shootout.

The loss to Atlanta gave the Senators a 28-35-10 regular-season record for 2008, one that falls to 28-39-10 mark if you include the first-round playoff sweep at the hands of the Pittsburgh Penguins.

TheHockeyNews

Brian Costello

thehockeynews.com

So, to review, the Senators have won just 28 of a possible 77 games in 2008, a year that started with so much promise and promises to end with so much despair. So what are the Senators to do? Are they at the point where they blow up this team and start anew? Do they become sellers as the trade deadline approaches and hope to get a boatload of young players and prospects/draft picks in exchange for Jason Spezza?

Or do they continue to show faith in this group of players and management team, confident that this group is far better than its record indicates and hopeful it has what it takes to turn the situation around?

Well, doing the last one hasn't exactly worked wonders for the Senators in 2008.

And there's very little evidence based on the past 12 months to suggest the team is miraculously going to morph into a redux of the 2007 team that went to the Stanley Cup final.

That leaves the major change route. It remains to be seen whether the Senators will employ it, but it should make for an interesting 2009.

The Hockey News
thn.com

Tiger aiming for Masters return

GOLF Tiger Woods has no idea when he will return to competitive golf next year, despite being ahead of schedule in his recovery from reconstructive knee surgery.

The world No. 1 has been sidelined since winning the U.S. Open in June. Ideally, he would like to play in at least a warmup event before the Masters in April.

"I've just been training and trying to get back, trying to get healthy enough to compete next year," Woods told a news conference. **REUTERS**

Canada drops to 90th in FIFA list

SOCCER European champions Spain were unsurprisingly recognized as the top-ranked team of the year yesterday after winning every match they played in 2008. The publication of FIFA's December rankings saw Spain stretch its lead at the top over second-placed Germany, the team they beat to win the Euro 2008 final in June.

Canada dropped to 90th, down 35 spots from the 55th they were ranked a year ago. **REUTERS**

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NHL Linden's jersey retired in Vancouver



Members of the Vancouver Canucks wear the jersey of former captain Trevor Linden before his number retirement ceremony last night. For a recap, visit www.metronews.ca/sports. **REUTERS/ANDY CLARK**

Sports in brief

NHL The Pittsburgh Penguins announced on Wednesday that goaltender Marc-Andre Fleury will start tonight against the Thrashers in Atlanta. Fleury had been sidelined with an undisclosed injury since Nov. 15, but returned to the club as the backup to Dany Sabourin last Saturday for the Pens' 6-3 loss in Philadelphia.

MLB The Los Angeles Dodgers have reportedly won the bid-

ding war to keep shortstop Rafael Furcal. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reports Furcal reached an agreement with the Dodgers yesterday, just two days after he apparently had an accord with the Braves. Atlanta's offer was reportedly for three years and \$30 million US, but media sources indicated that the Dodgers upped the ante to \$33 million over the same time period. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

SCOREBOARD

QMJHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Cape Breton 3 Moncton 2 (SO)
Quebec 2 P.E.I. 0

TONIGHT'S GAMES

Rimouski at Montreal
Drummondville at Shawinigan
Lewiston at Saint John
Val-d'Or at Rouyn-Noranda
P.E.I. at Victoriaville

TOMORROW'S GAMES

HALIFAX at Cape Breton
Saint John at Acadie-Bathurst
Lewiston at Moncton
Rimouski at Quebec
Chicoutimi at Baie-Comeau
P.E.I. at Drummondville
Montreal at Gatineau
Rouyn-Noranda at Val-d'Or
Shawinigan at Victoriaville

NHL

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Columbus 2 San Jose 1 (OT)
New Jersey 5 Buffalo 3
Calgary 3 Minnesota 2 (OT)
Edmonton at Vancouver
N.Y. Rangers at Los Angeles

TONIGHT'S GAMES

Toronto at Boston
St. Louis at Washington
Florida at Carolina
Pittsburgh at Atlanta
Philadelphia at Montreal
Colorado at Tampa Bay
San Jose at Detroit
Columbus at Dallas
Nashville at Phoenix

YorkReport

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will return

Overhaul goes into overdrive

Rebuilding of Mooseheads expected to heat up during holidays

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

The Halifax Mooseheads are expected to gently nudge toward a true rebuilding phase over the holidays.

You may think the Mooseheads are rebuilding already, given that they're coming off a busted run for a championship and have a beleaguered record of 10 wins in 35 games.

But they're the second oldest team in the league, and a youth movement, one way or another, is expected during the QMJHL's final trade period, which starts Saturday. Mooseheads' general manager Marcel Patenaude will look to ship out any tradeable veterans and strongly consider any rea-

sonable offer that comes across his desk.

"With the lack of picks we had and the lack of returning players, we brought in older guys off our protected list that we thought might bring us a better result," Patenaude said. "Obviously, we don't have the results we expected, and we have to look to the second half with a different eye."

The Mooseheads aren't exactly swimming in hot commodities, but forward Logan MacMillan, an Anaheim Ducks' first-rounder, and blue-liner Justin Pender, sought after for his booming shot, are likely to generate the most interest. For the veterans who aren't traded and do stick around, but aren't part of the blueprint for the future, the Mooseheads will

Let's make a deal

- The QMJHL trade period opens on Sunday at 1:01 a.m. and ends on Jan. 8 at 1 p.m. This is the third and final trade period of the 2008-09 season, meaning no more transactions can be made until the off-season.



Halifax Mooseheads forward Logan MacMillan may be a hot commodity during the upcoming QMJHL trading period.

likely push them further down the bench and into the press box in an effort to develop their youth for next season.

"We'll be looking in the second half to ice a team

that will be slightly younger," Patenaude confirmed.

The Mooseheads may also clear space to bring in young talent off their protected list, such as 18-year-

old blue-liner Jeremy Dunn. They are also working on convincing 18-year-old scoring forward Andrew O'Leary to report from the U.S.

MacMillan has struggled since coming back from a knee injury, with just one assist in five games. His trade value certainly isn't as high as the Mooseheads had hoped, and Patenaude historically doesn't respond well to low-ball offers.

A first-round pick and a solid 17- or 18-year-old player would no doubt be appetizing to Patenaude.

"Some teams have been inquiring about Logan, and we've told them, if (a trade) happens, we need a few assets," Patenaude said. "It's always the case for us, if we don't get the right offer for any of our players, we won't trade them."

For the Mooseheads' top-five trade commodities, visit Matthew Wuest's Q Files blog at www.metronews.ca/qfiles.

Trade sweepstakes set to begin

MATTHEW WUEST
matthew.wuest@metronews.ca

It's a time of uncertainty for QMJHL teams as the final trade period nears. Who's buying? Who's selling? Who's just not sure, and caught somewhere in between?

There are seven teams at the top of the standings eyeing a trip to the Memorial Cup, and all are at least considering buying up veteran talent to make a run for it. The Shawinigan Cataractes and Drummondville Voltigeurs are the cream of the crop, but the Moncton Wildcats and Quebec Remparts aren't far behind. Throw in the Cape

Breton Screaming Eagles and the Saint John Sea Dogs, not to mention the Memorial Cup-host Rimouski Oceanic, and you've got five teams who are going home unhappy in May.

With the trade period set to open on Saturday, some teams are wondering if it's worth selling the

farm. "It's a little weird this year," admitted P.E.I. Rocket general manager Serge Savard Jr. "But I believe, come Saturday, there will be announcements of big trades."

Shawinigan and Drummondville would be crazy not to buy, while Rimouski is guaranteed to go all out.

Of the remaining four, don't be surprised if at least two take a conservative approach. Rumours are already flying that Saint John has bowed out of the Memorial Cup sweepstakes and will sell.

According to one GM, the Sea Dogs have already traded scoring star Chris DiDomenico to Drummondville.

"If that's the case, they have the edge already," the GM said.

While there appears to be no shortage of demand, supply is lower than it has been in the past, making it that much more difficult for a contending team to land a proven veteran.

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Seasonal smarts

Before you start hanging holiday lights, test each strand — and measure the distance you need it to cover — to avoid an emergency trip to the store. **HGTV.ca**

23

Metro Homes

Last-minute festive decor

HomeScape



If you're one of those people who honestly do intend to put up Christmas decorations but haven't yet gotten around to it, don't worry. There really is time before your in-laws come knocking at the door ... but not much.

What you need is a plan to minimize work and maximize your holiday decor impact. Luckily, some of us have been there, and are willing to share the art of laying on the Christmas cheer pretty close to the deadline.

Rule number one is to scale down — concentrate on doing more with less.

Secret weapons

Here are a few other tricks for late decorators:

- Tie ribbon on candlesticks, plants, chair backs door-knobs or anything at all to make things look festive.
- Use shiny baubles, shiny metals and crystal pieces that will reflect light or let it sparkle through.
- Have lots of candles and a

Stuck for a holiday-decor theme? Tried-and-true options include high-shine and natural looks — and you can always resort to some combination of red, green gold and silver.



Try to avoid plastering the house with every last piece of Christmas finery you've acquired over the last decade. For a classy look, less is more. Be selective.

It can be handy to go with a theme in order to choose which decorations you need to use, and which ones you need to keep stored away.

You may decide to go with ornaments of a certain colour, for example. If you do, pick colours that harmonize with your home decor.

But you're at a loss about how to coordinate holiday decor with your purple

walls, you can always go for some combination of red, green, gold and silver, which always works well at Christmas.

If you're willing to be adventurous, you could go with a theme, such as ornaments from a certain time, like '70s disco, or an old-fashioned Victorian-looking Christmas, or a "bling" Christmas using baubles and enormous rings.

Something unique can be refreshingly original, but the old standards can be quite lovely too. As always, traditional colours always look great with evergreen boughs, pinecones, grasses, branches and berries. Although the natural look may not be new and exciting, it looks reliably classy.

When it comes to choosing areas of the house to decorate, stick to a few highly visible areas. A Christmas tree is obligatory in most houses. Other visible areas include the front door or windows, a fireplace mantel and a staircase railing.

Unless your children or family members are sticklers for the traditional tree, you do not necessarily have to cut one and drag it home. To keep things easier, go for a bunch of large evergreen boughs arranged into a large vase, or a small pine in a pot which you can transplant in your garden or use as a house plant afterwards.

Keep with the Christmas decor theme, if you used one. To decorate quickly, use larger ornaments, or tie eye-catching ribbons to the branches. For staircases and mantels above fireplaces, think in term of garlands or a regularly spaced series of wreaths.

Swags of fabric can also work nicely, draped and arranged prettily, and interspersed with shiny ornamentation or wrapped around sparkly LED lights that remain cool when turned on.

Sylvia Putz is a journalist with an interest in decor and design. She's written for the TV show Arresting Design; sputz@arrestingdesign.com.

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According to the latest Eating Patterns In Canada (EPIC) report from The NPD Group, a full 88 per cent of respondents revealed their intentions to decrease the amount of time spent dining out in restaurants, choosing the comforts of home instead. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Food

“Just 5 Things: Easy Gourmet Cooking with Just a Handful of Ingredients is true to its word — all recipes contain only five ingredients.”

Metro News Services



In colour
The Reader's Digest book, by Rachel Lane, contains more than 330 recipes, all illustrated with full-colour photographs.

EDITOR: NINA DRAGICEVIC, NINA.DRAGICEVIC@METRONEWS.CA

Try these season's eatings

À la carte



Sticky Toffee Pudding is a classic dessert of British origins. It is a winter dessert when warm and comforting — it really hits the spot. There are just about as many recipes for sticky toffee pudding (also referred to as sticky date pudding) as people who make them. Hope you enjoy this one. Wishing you delicious season's eatings!

Sticky Toffee Puddings

The puddings and the sauce can be made a day ahead, just cool, cover and refrigerate separately. The easiest way to reheat is briefly in the microwave —individually about 20 to 30 seconds until warm not hot. Don't overheat or they will go rubbery. Reheat sauce in microwave until warm. Look for honey dates in the produce section rather than the firm, pressed dated in the baking section. Makes 8 servings.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1-1/2 cups (375 mL) pitted dates (about 8 oz/250 g), chopped

- 1 tsp (5 mL) baking soda
- 3/4 cup (175 mL) boiling water
- 1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla
- 1-1/4 cups (300 mL) all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) baking powder
- 1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
- 1/3 cup (75 mL) butter, softened
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) dark brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- Toffee Sauce:**
- 3/4 cup (175 mL) dark brown sugar
- 4 tsp (20 mL) cornstarch
- 1 cup (250 mL) milk
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) butter
- 1 tsp (5 mL) vanilla

METHOD:

Place dates and baking soda in a heatproof bowl. Pour boiling water over, stir and submerge dates in water; let stand 10 minutes until dates are well-softened. Mash with a fork. Stir in vanilla.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Butter 8 ramekin or custard cups. Whisk together flour, baking powder and salt, set aside.

In a bowl, beat butter and brown sugar together until creamy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Fold in flour mixture then date mixture until evenly mixed (don't overmix). Divide batter between cups, filling about 3/4's full.



There are just about as many recipes for sticky toffee pudding as people who make them.

Place ramekins on a baking sheet and bake until puddings spring back when lightly touched or toothpick inserted in centre comes out clean, about 25 minutes. Transfer ramekins to wire rack to cool 10 minutes. Run a knife around edges to loosen.

While puddings are baking, make sauce. In a 4 cup (1 L) glass measure or bowl, whisk sugar and cornstarch together. Whisk in milk until smooth. Microwave, uncovered at High for 2 to 3 minutes or until mixture comes to a boil and thickens. Whisk a few times during cooking. Stir in butter until melted, then vanilla. Makes about

1-1/4 cups (300 mL).

To serve, turn warm puddings out onto individual plates and serve warm with warm Toffee Sauce.

When the days are short and the long, cold nights descend early, the Festival of Chanukah arrives. The flickering lights of the Chanukah menorah (chanukiah) will join the lights of the Shabbos candles. It's time, once again to recall the miracle that took place over 2,000 years ago, when a small band of Maccabees were victorious over their enemies and a little jar of oil, enough to burn for only one day, miraculously burned for eight.

In honour of the miracle which occurred with oil, it is traditional to eat foods fried in oil. Potato latkas and sufganiot (Israeli-style doughnuts) are popular. Dairy dishes are also customary and this recipe from Norene's Healthy Kitchen — Eat Your Way to Good Health by Norene Gilletz (Whitecap Books, \$35) is both light and decadent.

Decadent Marbled Cheesecake

Recipe can be made up to 3 to 4 days ahead (store in refrigerator). Leftovers, if any, can be frozen. Makes 12 servings.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 lb (500 g) light cream cheese, cut in chunks
- 1/2 lb (250 g) nonfat pressed (smooth) cottage cheese, cut into chunks
- 1 cup (250 mL) granulated sugar
- 2 eggs plus 2 egg whites (or 3 eggs)
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) Passover brandy or liqueur
- 3 oz (75 g) dark, bittersweet chocolate, melted (or 1/2 cup/125 mL) chocolate chips)

METHOD:

Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Fill a baking pan half-full with water and place it on the bottom rack of the oven. (The steam helps prevent the cheese-

cake from cracking.) Spray a 10-inch ceramic quiche dish with cooking spray.

In a food processor fitted with steel blade, process cream cheese, cottage cheese and sugar until smooth, about 30 seconds. Add eggs and brandy; process until well-mixed, about 25 to 30 seconds longer. (Don't over-process.) Remove 1 cup (250 mL) batter and mix with melted chocolate until blended.

Pour the white batter into prepared dish. Pour chocolate batter over white batter in a wide circle, about 1/2-inch (1 cm) in from the sides of the dish; there should be a bull's-eye of white batter in the centre. Cut through the batter carefully with a knife to create a marbled effect. Don't blend the batter too much or the marbled effect will disappear. Bake on middle rack for 30 to 35 minutes or until centre jiggles slightly when you shake the dish, but cheesecake won't be sticky when touched lightly with your fingertips. Let cool completely, then cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate.

• For more recipes from Norene, visit gourmanina.com.

Barb Holland is a professional home economist and food writer who believes in shopping locally and in season.

Food + Entertaining

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GIVE HOLIDAY STRESS THE BOOT!

We've got 6 simple tips to help just about anybody stay on top of things this holiday season.

Are you getting more stressed out as the holidays approach? Does the mere thought of not finding the perfect gift for each person, entertaining people at home, or finding the right dress for the office party make you nervous? The holiday season is supposed to be fun... but for those who need to juggle work, a household, gifts and entertaining, it can sometimes seem like an obstacle course.

(continued online...)

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Vuitton flagship planned in Tokyo cancelled

LVMH, the world's biggest luxury goods group, has scrapped a planned Louis Vuitton flagship store in Tokyo's glitzy Ginza shopping district, as a spreading recession takes the lustre off designer brands. **REUTERS**

25

Style



A fashion statement with a message

Italian Jewelry line DeMaria is celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with a unique and timeless collection. The jewelry line includes pendants, bracelets and rings (left) engraved with words and phrases taken directly from the original document. Each item is made of solid 925 silver and comes in a variety of plating including white silver, yellow gold and black ruthenium. Ranging in price from \$350 to \$475, the collection is available at Exclusive Diamonds (exclusive-diamonds.com). **METRO NEWS SERVICE**

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE COLACINO, ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

Heating up the holidays

Style File

Kim Elbo



kim.elbo@gmail.com

ask kim

I bought a New Year's Eve dress that's a tad tight and now I need to buy shapewear that will smooth out the appearance of my undergarments. Do you have any suggestions?

We've all gone running to Spanx, but the U.S.-based company isn't the only one helping us out when it comes to unwanted bulges; Joe Fresh carries similar body slimming shorts and Vancouver designer Twin Syndrome is shaping our tummys with high-waisted underwear.

E-mail your style questions to kim.elbo@gmail.com.

Vancouver's Kim Elbo has a passion for fashion. Here she shares the latest style tips.

GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt



Check out Kenya's best/worst dressed list, exclusively at metronews.ca/globalstyle



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tip: Always lay your underwire bras flat to dry, never put them in the dryer. Over time the heat from machine drying can warp and distort the wires in your bra.

Bruni sues fashion chain

LEGAL

French first lady Carla Bruni-Sarkozy is suing a fashion chain for selling bags emblazoned with nude images of her in the latest legal action over the presidential couple's image.



Carla Bruni-Sarkozy

At a court hearing on Monday in the French Indian Ocean island of Reunion, Bruni-Sarkozy's lawyer said the former model was demanding 125,000 euros (\$168,300) in damages from local chain Pardon which sold the bags there for a few days.

"This little-known company is using the image of a famous person in a shocking way ... for media attention," Gesche Le Fur told the court in the island's capital, Saint Denis.

Bruni-Sarkozy, 40, rose to fame as a model before becoming a pop singer. Public interest in her has surged since her whirlwind romance with President Nicolas Sarkozy, whom she married in February less than three months after they met.

The couple have repeatedly gone to court over image issues, attracting criticism that they are too focused on trivial matters.

REUTERS

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Mamma Mia sinks Titanic
Mamma Mia! has nudged aside the 11-time Oscar winner Titanic as the top-grossing film of all time at the U.K. box office. EONLINE.COM

Entertainment

EDITOR: TINA COSTANZA, TINA.COSTANZA@METRONEWS.CA

Fall Out Boy whip up prog-pop sound

Fall Out Boy

Album: Folie a Deux

Label: Island

Rating:

FALL OUT BOY throws its punk pop identity out the window in exchange for something much grander and ambitious in scope. It seems that lyricist/bassist Pete Wentz is now moving in much loftier circles since marrying pop princess Ashlee Simpson. He's rubbing musical elbows with Elvis Costello, Lil Wayne and Deborah Harry, who add vocals to this album. The band's pop sensibilities remain, but are almost lost in a mix of strings, keyboards and uberdense production. The band seems to be striving to create something that could only be called prog-pop. A noble cause. There are times when it works with huge success like on What A Catch Donnie, but at others it lacks focus. This CD may turn off old fans and probably won't win Fall Out Boy any new ones. Still the band gets major points for trying to break out of its cocoon.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

All-American Rejects

Album: When The World Comes Down

Label: Interscope/Universal

Rating: ½

WHINEY POP

rock from Oklahoma. Inspid lyrics, like "breakin' is what your heart is for," make it obvious that this band's name has more bite than its music. The All-American Rejects' third album is made partly palatable by the gang vocals on Gives You Hell, the unabashed adolescent pawing of I Wanna and the surprisingly sophisticated vocal mix with folk-rockers Catherine and Allison Pierce (The Pierces) on Another Heart Calls.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada



The All-American Rejects' name has more bite than its music.

Keyshia Cole

Album: A Different Me

Label: Geffen/Universal

Rating: ½

AFTER RE-LEASING an album titled Just Like You, some Keyshia Cole fans might be a bit concerned by the name of their R&B super-starlet's follow-up, A Different Me. They can relax. Cole's mastery of the smooth, infectious soul hasn't waned, and it's still on full display here. What's different is her attitude. While she's usually focused on pain and hurt, this time around the Oakland-born songstress is far more upbeat and positive — both in her lyrics, which are generally about relationships, and her music. It's a great step forward for this rising star.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

Souljaboy

Album: iSouljaBoyTellem

Label: Interscope/Universal

Rating:

WITH ITS EASI-

LY accessible beats and urban dictionary rap clichés, this is an album that will be grooved to by suburban 12-year-old boys who still haven't figured out how silly they

MusicReviews

music@metronews.ca

look in their crooked ball caps and bling. Its subject matter deals with the joys of swag, booty, Gucci accessories, and, most of all, Souljaboy. It's like this 18-year-old wonder still can't believe he's hit the big time. Well, frankly, neither can we.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Ghostface Killah

Album: GhostDeini The Great

Label: Def Jam/Universal

Rating:

IF THERE'S

ONE thing everyone can count on during the holiday season it's a new Ghostface Killah album. This year — his third consecutive Xmas time release — the prolific Wu-Tang member has offered up a collection of unreleased tracks, remixes of existing tunes and a hilarious Ghostface Christmas rap. While this potential stocking stuffer isn't as good as some of his other releases, this album's versions of All That I Got Is You, with Mary J. Blige and Back Like That, with Kanye, should make his fans anxious for Santa Claus to arrive.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

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Oprah inks HBO deal

HBO announced Tuesday that the cable network had signed an exclusive multiyear deal with Oprah Winfrey's Harpo Films to develop and produce scripted television programming. TVGUIDE.COM

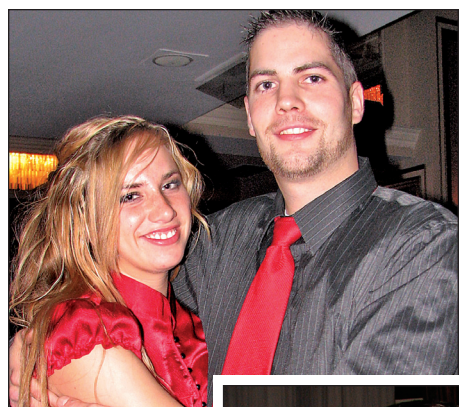


Above: Melissa Edwards, left, Melissa Stuart, and Natasha Benigno demonstrate why the Molson Give-R is such a popular event.



Above: Andy Goggin, left, Shannon MacGregor, and Jon Lee at the Westin Christmas party for HMCS Iroquois.

Right: James and Amy Larrieux at HMCS Iroquois' holiday blowout at the Westin Nova Scotian.



Left: HMCS Iroquois' newly-engaged couple Larissa Close and Paul Haynes celebrate being back home for the holidays.

Right: Cathy Edmond and Steve Tremblay enjoying a moment at the HMCS Iroquois Christmas party.



Nutcrackers, Christmas parties and a rain storm

HalifaxScene

Jamie Paterson



Sometimes it's like the party gods conspire against us. It's the only explanation I have for last Friday's wind and rain blast that threatened to blow the Christmas spirit right out of me.

Luckily, my spirit tank was full, and a little wind and rain wasn't going to ruin the Scene.

There's nothing like a holiday luncheon to kick off the week — like the Nutcracker Luncheon, last Wednesday at the World Trade and Convention Centre.

Symphony Nova Scotia has been providing the soundtrack for this event for many years.

The holiday season staple is a key fundraiser for Phoenix Youth Programs, to help homeless teens and those at risk find a better way through music.

The theme this year was the importance of music to our youth. KOOL FM's morning team, Griff Henderson and Caroline Parker, hosted another successful afternoon, follow-

ing in the footsteps of the last three sold-out Nutcracker luncheons.

What may have been the best party of the season took over the Westin last weekend.

After a six-month deployment, HMCS Iroquois returned home at the end of October. The ship held its Christmas party for family and friends, and it was the first time for all to socialize since pulling into port.

To say this group was primed to party would be an understatement. Celebrations included talk of engagements and new babies as couples got reacquainted.

The whole night had a great atmosphere of celebration, relief and joy. Welcome home guys and gals — and thank you!

The Halifax Alehouse was my next stop for an early Molson Give-R. Usually held on the last Friday of the month, this time it was moved up a few weeks because of Christmas.

For only five dollars, you can help out a great charity, get a cold beverage and blow off some stress after the work week.

This month the charity was Operation Red Nose, a group of dedicated volunteers who help the overindulgent get home safely.

Upstairs at the Alehouse, another group of dedicated and helping folks was blowing off some steam. These ones were respiratory therapists from the IWK Health Centre, breathing life into a gray Friday night with their holiday celebration.

I planned on attending the FRED holiday party featuring Tom Collins Friday evening, but couldn't see any signs of life inside the trendy salon.

Perhaps I just couldn't see through the sheets of rain dumping Friday night. It was time for me to white-knuckle it home.

I'm going to abuse the power of The Scene for a moment and be a bit selfish. Q-104's female morning voice has reached a milestone today.

Lordy, lordy, my wife Lisa Blackburn is ... well, the number isn't important, but she's the same age as the Beatles White Album. So, to the best co-host I ever had in radio ... and in life ... happy birthday Lisa!

Your man on The Scene is putting the camera down long enough to drink some eggnog and shake presents under the tree.

So be good, and we'll see you in the new year!

When he's not making the Scene, Jamie Paterson hosts The Drive and The Beatlebrunch on KOOL FM in Halifax



Above: Beata Cawley and Tracy Cushing at the IWK Respiratory Therapy holiday celebration.

Right: Lori Machina, left, Paul McCarthy, and Tanya Ford at the HMCS Iroquois' Christmas party.



Left: Christian Brown does a perfect "spit take" as Angela Simmons laughs at an HMCS Iroquois Christmas party joke.



Above: Dartmouth Pigdogs rugby team members Glenn Johnston and Jon Dicks at the Halifax Alehouse.

‘The worst possible message,’ Idol judge says

IntelleVision



Rick McGinnis
rick.mcginis@metronews.ca

WHAT HAPPENED? Whether you're a fan of Canadian Idol or not — and I have always been firmly in the latter camp — you can't help but wonder just why a national network would put on hiatus a show that they'd spend six seasons trumpeting as a ratings triumph and a cultural landmark that only they could have made happen.

The only thing that's clear right now is that CTV didn't want the news of the show's one-year "rest" to break as quickly as it did this week, but a groundswell of online buzz fed by the grumbling that happens when you pink-slip hundreds of cast and crew — aided in perhaps the smallest way by my own inquiries on Tuesday — forced them to make a curt but definitive statement.

I still needed answers,



Canadian Idol judge Zack Werner says the cost of CTV's Olympic commitments was a factor in the show being put on hiatus.

however, so I called up Zack Werner, the only Idol personality who has, so far, made any public statements on the news.

After giving me some grief for my anti-Idol statements, Werner said that while he's not privy to the budgets or decisions made at CTV or by Insight, Idol's production company, "I do know that every year when we go to renew our deal with the show we're always told that the show is prohibitively expensive and Canadian advertisers are always a hard sell to get them to put any money into a Canadian property."

"And that given the dearth of automobile advertising that's going to go on in the future, that the sales team at CTV came back to the powers that be and told them that they couldn't make their nut."

Werner says that one of the reasons they were given for the network's belt-

tightening was the cost of their Olympic commitments.

"They paid \$100 million for the Olympics, at a time when the economy looked booming, and now they've got to sell the advertising for that," he said, which quickly led to a discussion of just how CTV will replace Idol in their schedule.

"It begs the question — so you're going to put on a less expensive show where advertisers pay less money on slots on shows that are going to have fewer viewers?"

"And you're going to pay the licence fee, which they're going to have to pay to Fremantle (Idol's parent company) whether they do the show or not. So the combination of paying the license fee and putting on cheaper programming and selling the advertising for less makes more economic sense than putting on our show — I think that begs some questions, don't you?"

At the risk of sounding altruistic — "because I'm not the most altruistic person in the world" — Wern-

er wonders what message is being sent to the "thousands of kids who, at a time when the economy is selling them a picture that the future is bleak, if you ever needed a dream, and a dream that gave you a chance to compete for it becoming a reality, and understanding what it means to work hard and have an option, now is the time when we need a show like this."

"Unfortunately, it's the worst possible message they could be sending out."

Rick McGinnis writes about music, movies, books and television, but not opera.

GlobalStyle



Kenya Hunt
Exclusive at
metronews.ca/style



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Dexter finale slays competition

RATINGS Dexter killed for Showtime in its third-season finale.

The serial-killer saga drew 1.5 million total viewers at 9 p.m. on Sunday, making it the premium network's most-watched telecast since 2004, when Nielsen began reporting Showtime ratings separate from Showtime Plex.

That's up seven per cent compared with the Season 2 finale (1.4 million).

REUTERS

‘Pimped out’ anchor promoted at MSNBC

NEWS MSNBC anchor David Shuster, who got in to trouble earlier this year for saying Chelsea Clinton had been "pimped out" by her mother's presidential campaign, will take the helm of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, the nightly news program on politics and Washington news.

He will replace David Gregory, who left the show created earlier this year to become moderator of Meet the Press at broadcast sibling NBC.

REUTERS

HA	H	D	B	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	
12/18/08	31	31	31	ABC	News (N)	ABC Wld News	Inside Edition	Chronicle	Ugly Betty (HDTV)	Grey's Anatomy		Practice	
	7	7	7	ASN	The Road to Avonlea	Instant Star	TMZ (N)	Million Dollar Password	Private Practice	Eleventh Hour		National	
	11	11	11	CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy!	NHL Hockey Philadelphia Flyers at Montreal Canadiens. From the Bell Centre in Montreal.					Le Téléjournal	
	2	2	2	CBC-F	Pyramide (SC)	Mr. Bean (SC)	Antarctique	Joyeux Noël *** (2005, Guerre) Diane Kruger. (SC)				Bougon	Le Téléjournal
	32	32	32	CBS	News (N)	Evening News	The Insider (N)	Entertainment	Million Dollar Password	CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.	Eleventh Hour		
	69	69	69	CFTM	TVA 18 heures	Le Cercle (SC)	Clodine	Faux départ ** (2006, Com. Sentimentale)			Juste pour rire	TVA 22 heures	
	6	6	6	CIHF	Entertainment	ET Canada	Mall Santa (N)	Bad Santa *** (2003, Comedy) Billy Bob Thornton.			News (N)		
	9	9	9	CJCH	etalk	Hollywood	CSI: Miami	CSI: NY	CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.	News (N)		News (N)	
	10	10	10	ELTV	(6) EastLink Television		Podium TV		EastLink Television		Fox First		
	36	36	36	FOX	Deal-No Deal	The Simpsons	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Secret Millionaire (N)	Smarter Than a 5th Grader?		30 Rock	
pruntime	12	12	12	NBC	News (N)	NBC News	Hollywood	Extra (N)	Name Is Earl	Kath & Kim	The Office	30 Rock	
	29	29	29	NW	World News	Business	CBC News	Newman	The Hour	CBC News: The National		Hobbit Enigma	
	4	4	4	PBS-B	NewsHour With Jim Lehrer	Greater Boston	Basic Black	Thomas Merton	Chicano Rock! The Sounds		Faith Hill, Joy		
	35	35	35	PBS-D	NewsHour With Jim Lehrer	Business Rpt.	Worldfocus	Roy Orbison & Friends: Black & White Night		My Music: Doo Wop Love			
	68	68	68	TQS	(6:30) Le Retour (SC)		Fous de Noël (2005, Drame) Andrea Roth, Howard Hesseman.		Pushing Daisies (SC)		110 pour cent		
	23	96	96	BNN	Business News	Headline	Market Call	Commodities	GetConnected	Business News	Squeeze Play	Market Call	
	18	18	18	CNN	(5) The Situation Room		Lou Dobbs Tonight	Campbell Brown: No Bias	Larry King Live		Cooper 360		
	54	54	54	GOLF	Golf Central	World	Bag Men	Top 10	Top 10	Top 10	PGA Tour Golf: Chevron World Challenge		
	52	52	52	RSE	Prime Time Sports		UEFA Cup Soccer Tottenham Hotspur vs. Spartak Moscow.		Best Damn Sports Show		Sportsnet Con.		
	55	55	55	SCOR	Hockey Talk	Game On	Score on NFL	Strikeforce	NBA Basketball San Antonio Spurs at Orlando Magic. (Live)		Wrecked		
sports	45	45	45	SPD	Unique Whips	Pinks	Pass Time	Pinks -- All Out		Pinks -- All Out (HDTV)		Wrecked	
	53	53	53	TSN	Off the Record	SportsCentre	That's Hockey!	Interruption	NFL Football Indianapolis Colts at Jacksonville Jaguars. (HDTV) (Live)		Wrecked		
	43	43	43	FAM	Zoey 101	Life Derek	Wizards-Place	That's-Raven	Zack & Cody	Natural-Sadie	Han. Montana	Life Derek	
	44	44	44	TOON	Buster & Chauncey's		Santa Claus	Bugs Bunny & Tweety Show	Wayside	Johnny Test	Futurama	The Critic	
	26	26	26	TREE	Max & Ruby	Christopher	Go, Diego, Go!	Nght Grdn	Backyardigans	Franklin	Little Bear	Maggie-Beast	
	27	27	27	YTV	Christmas Carol	A Flintstone Christmas	Pinky & Brain	Pinky & Brain	Futurama	Prank Patrol	Mystery Hnt.	Mystery Hnt.	
	16	16	16	A&E	Cold Case Files		CSI: Miami "Pro Per"	The First 48 (HDTV)	The First 48 (HDTV)	The First 48 (HDTV)		The First 48	
	70	70	70	APTN	News		Suaangan	Wapos Bay	By the Rapids	renegadeexpress	Lara Croft: Tomb Raider (2001, Adventure)		
	50	50	50	BET	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live Top 10.		Idlewild *** (2006, Drama) André Benjamin, Paula Patton.		Gangster		Snapshot		
	37	37	37	BRVO	Street Legal		Desperate Housewives		The Nutcracker (N)		Snapshot		
news	25	25	25	CMT	All Through the Night		Paul Brandt's Christmas		Home Improve.	Home Improve.	Reba	Reba	
	49	49	49	COM	Laughs	Comedy Now	Air Farce	Just for Laughs	Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	VIP	
	153	153	153	COURT	Truth, Duty, Valour		The Investigators		Cops Uncut	Dumb Criminal	Navy SEALs: Untold Stories	Investigators	
	38	38	38	DISC	How It's Made		How It's Made		Daily Planet (N)	Daily Planet Goes to Brazil	MythBusters		
	34	48	48	HGTV	Holmes on Homes		House Hunters	Property Virgin	Holmes on Homes	The Fix	Disaster DIY	Home to Flip	
	46	46	46	HIST	Battlefield Mysteries		NCIS "Model Behavior"		Lost Worlds Cold War.		Battlefield Mysteries		
	17	17	17	MM	Meet Barkers	Meet Barkers	Gossip Girl (HDTV)	So You Think You Can Dance Canada				Gossip Girl	
	19	19	19	MMM	MusicProfile	mmmtop10.com	Back In	Johnny Cash: Man in Black		Listed	Tommy Lee		
	201	201	201	M1	(6:45) First Sunday (2008, Comedy)		Surviving My Mother (2007), Ellen David		Romulus, My Father ** (2007, Drama)		Survivorman		
	48	23	23	OLN	The Amazing Race 7 (Part 1 of 2)		House-Payne	House-Payne	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	
family	51	51	51	PEACH	Seinfeld	Friends	House-Payne	House-Payne	Friends	Friends	Friends	Friends	
	206	206	206	PIX	(6:20) Ararat (2002, Historical Drama)		(8:20) Bandido ** (1956, Adventure)		Get Carter * (2000, Suspense)		Rétrospective/hommage à		
	67	67	67	RDI	RDI en direct	RDI en direct	24 Heures en 60 minutes		Grands reportages (SC)	Le Téléjournal	Rétrospective/hommage à		
	39	39	39	SHOW	EastEnders	Spaced	Painkiller Jane		ReGenesis (HDTV)	Trailer Park	Trailer Park	NUMB3RS	
	40	40	40	SLICE	X-Weighted "Jannette"		Til Debt-Part	Rich Poor	Bulging Brides	Bulging Brides	Last 10	Last 10	
	47	47	47	SPACE	Stargate SG-1		Lost "Enter 77"		Star Trek: Voyager	Famous Monster		Chuck	
	14	14	14	SPIKE	CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.	TNA IMPACT! (HDTV) (N)		Tonight Show	
	57	98	98	STAR	etalk	Hollywood	Look-A-Like	Books-Film	TMZ (N)	etalk	Staying Young in Hollywood		
	21	21	21	TLC	What Not to Wear		Overhaulin' (HDTV)		American Chopper		American Chopper		
	56	34	34	TROP	Make or Break	Naked Fashion	Beverly Hills, 90210	Make or Break	What Happen?	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	
cable variety	20	20	20	TV5	Que.-champion	Journal de Fr2	Toute une histoire		Club social	Complément d'enquête		Passion	
	28	28	28	V	Mysterious Island		Murder, She Wrote		Waiting for God		A Holiday Romance ** (1999, Drama)		
	60	97	97	VIVA	Mysterious Ways		Judging Amy		Commander In Chief		The West Wing	Passion	
	22	22	22	W	(6) Stolen Miracle (2001)		Friends	Will & Grace	Confidential	Shopping Bags	Catch a Falling Star ** (2000, Romance)		
	251	251	251	WGN	Be-Millionaire	Evening News	Two/Half Men	Family Guy	Smallville "Instinct"	Supernatural (HDTV)		WGN News	

critics'corner

My Name Is Earl
Time for a reshuffling of Earl's (Jason Lee) list. One particular item becomes a matter of life and death and jumps to the top when a mysterious man moves next door to Earl and Randy (Ethan Suplee). Joy (Jaime Pressly) has her eyes on a prize — a monetary award in a science fair — "Sold a Guy a Lemon Car." 9 PM on NBC



Mall Santa
Not everyone is suited to play Santa Claus, but the three guys featured in this new documentary seem born to the role. As shopping-mall Santas, John, Bernie and Roy have held more kids in their laps and heard more Christmas wishes than they can count. But it's not an easy gig — and in some cases, there's no gig at all. After 50 years of playing Santa, Bernie has a tough time finding a mall job, and the one he does find is disappointing. 8 PM on CIHF

Paul Brandt's Christmas in Banff
Paul Brandt is back in Banff, Alta., in this holiday special from 2006. Performing outdoors in a cold gazebo, he is joined by guests Aaron Lines, Greg Sczebel and Liz Brandt in singing Christmas classics. 8 PM on CMT

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Celebrity Buzz

Madge, Guy slam settlement story

SETTLEMENT Madonna and Guy Ritchie are slamming recent stories about their divorce settlement, people.com reports.

The joint statement — issued in London — came just days after Madonna's U.S. rep gave the Associated Press details of the supposed deal. Liz Rosenberg said Madonna, 50, was set to hand over cash and property worth between \$76 million US and \$92 million US, calling it "one of the largest (divorce) payouts ever."

But now the couple calls that information "misleading and inaccurate."

The statement

reads: "We have tried to maintain a dignified silence regarding the details of our divorce for the last few months whilst accepting the obvious media interest ... The financial details of the settlement will remain private, save to say that both of us are happy with our agreement."

"Our primary concern, like any co-parents, is the care and well being of our children."

The couple — whose divorce will become final in January — have two sons, Rocco, 8, David, 3. Madonna has a daughter, Lourdes, 12, from her relationship with Carlos Leon.

Madonna has a daughter, Lourdes, 12, from her relationship with Carlos Leon.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



GETTY IMAGES PHOTOS

A-Rod to Christmas with Madonna?

HOLIDAYS Guess who's coming home for Christmas? Madonna had agreed to give up her New York Christmas and spend the holiday with ex Guy Ritchie and their kids in the U.K., but there's a catch, hollyscoop.com reports. Her boy toy Alex Rodriguez is coming along for the ride.

The website reports that Madonna and her kids will jet to London on December 23 and stay for Christmas, while A-Rod takes a different flight out

right before Christmas and hangs out in a hotel waiting for Madonna to finish playing Mommy.

A source tells the UK Sun: "She wants the kids to be with their parents, but wants time with A-Rod, too."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Prenup for Brangelina?

PRENUP While there's been no official word that they are getting married, Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie are reportedly hammering out the details of a \$200 million US prenuptial agreement, according to Star magazine.

Pitt "wants a prenup in place that spells out everything — their finances, their property and who will raise their children in case something happens," a source tells the magazine.

But according to another source close to the couple, Jolie thinks such an agreement suggests "that deep down Brad may still harbour doubts."

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Lohan runs into her stalker

RUN IN Lindsay Lohan came face-to-face with her suspected stalker Tuesday night while leaving a club outside

Phoenix earlier this morning, popeater.com reports.

The website says she and Samantha Ronson were exiting the Jackrabbit Lounge when a man in the crowd jumped Lohan, trying to go around club security to meet her.

The 38-year old man was tackled by police and arrested for disorderly conduct.

METRO NEWS SERVICES



Kidman warned she may be 'barren'

CULTURE Nicole Kidman has been warned she may not have any more children — because she tried to play the didgeridoo, according to ananova.com.

The Oscar winner blew into the traditional instrument while promoting her latest film Australia on a German television show. Co-star Hugh Jackman laughed and danced on one leg while she played during their appearance

on Wetten, Dass...?

But Kidman's performance upset members of the Aboriginal community, who say she should know the didgeridoo is taboo for women.

"People are going to see Nicole playing it and think it's all right," actor, screenwriter and Aboriginal language teacher Richard Green told the Sydney Morning Herald.

"It bastardises our culture. I will guarantee she has no more children," he said. "It is not meant to be played by women as it will make them barren."

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HELLO!

Hot shot of the week



Fashion designer extraordinaire Roberto Cavalli recently invited HELLO! into his opulent home in Florence, Italy, for a festive family celebration. Cavalli (at back) stands proudly with his children, their spouses and grandchildren; wife Eva is pictured below left. "Christmas is one of the few occasions we're all together," she says.

HELLO! CANADA magazine, now available on newsstands — read more at hellomagazine.ca

Gosling still loves McAdams: Source

LOVE Ryan Gosling is still in love with Rachel McAdams, imdb.com reports. The pair — who met on the set of romantic movie The Notebook — split in November, but friends say the actor can't get over Rachel.

A source said: "Ryan is still close to the McAdams family and he still speaks to Rachel, but they are both openly single. He still loves Rachel, and she still loves him, but the timing is off and they can't

make each other happy right now."

The 32-year-old actress is currently in London filming Guy Ritchie's new project Sherlock Holmes, while Gosling is busy working on a new career in music.

The source said: "Ryan is completely focused on putting out his album. He is spending a lot of time in the recording studio."

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